

Reconquista and Islam in Spain

What was the Reconquista?

The Reconquista is the name given to a long series of wars and battles between the Christian Kingdoms and the Muslim Moors for control of the Iberian Peninsula. It lasted for a good portion of the Middle Ages from 718 to 1492.

What is the Iberian Peninsula?

The Iberian Peninsula is located in the far southwest of Europe. Today the majority of the peninsula includes the countries Spain and Portugal. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Pyrenees Mountains.

Who were the Moors?

The Moors were Muslims who lived in the northern African countries of Morocco and Algeria. They called the land of the Iberian Peninsula "Al-Andalus".

The Moors Invade Europe

In 711 the Moors crossed the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa and invaded the Iberian Peninsula. Over the next seven years they advanced into Europe and controlled the majority of the peninsula. The division of the land before Granada was retaken

Start of the Reconquista

The Reconquista began in 718 when King Pelayo of the Visigoths defeated the Muslim army in Alcala at the Battle of Covadonga. This was the first significant victory of the Christians over the Moors.

Many Battles

Over the next several hundred years the Christians and the Moors would do battle. Charlemagne would halt the Moors advance at the borders of France, but taking back the peninsula would take over 700 years. There were many battles won and lost on both sides. Both sides also experienced internal struggles for power and civil war.

The Catholic Church

During the latter part of the Reconquista it was considered a holy war similar to the Crusades. The Catholic Church wanted the Muslims removed from Europe. Several military orders of the church such as the Order of Santiago and the Knights Templar fought in the Reconquista.

Fall of Granada

After years of fighting, the nation of Spain was united when King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile were married in 1469. The land of Granada was still ruled by the Moors, however. Ferdinand and Isabella then turned their united forces on Grenada, taking it back in 1492 and ending the Reconquista.

Timeline of the Reconquista

711 - The Moors conquer the Iberian Peninsula.

718 - The Reconquista begins with the victory of Pelayo at the Battle of Covadonga.

721 - The Moors are turned back from France with a defeat at the Battle of Toulouse.

791 - King Alfonso II becomes King of Asturias. He will firmly establish the kingdom in northern Iberia.

930 to 950 - The King of Leon defeats the Moors in several battles.

950 - The Duchy of Castile is established as an independent Christian state.

1085 - Christian warriors capture Toledo.

1086 - The Almoravids arrive from North Africa to help the Moors in pushing back the Christians.

1094 - El Cid takes control of Valencia.

1143 - The Kingdom of Portugal is established.

1236 - By this date half of Iberia had been retaken by Christian forces.

1309 - Fernando IV takes Gibraltar.

1468 - Ferdinand and Isabella unite Castile and Aragon into a single united Spain.

1492 - The Reconquista is complete with the fall of Granada.

Spanish Inquisition Questions

- 1) Where was the Reconquista fought?
 - Holy Land
 - England
 - Iberian Peninsula
 - Germany
 - Italy
- 2) What two religious groups fought for control during the Reconquista?
 - Jews and the Christians
 - Muslims and Jews
 - Protestants and Catholics
 - Pagans and Christians
 - Christians and the Muslims
- 3) What two countries make up the majority of the Iberian Peninsula today?
 - England and Ireland
 - Spain and Portugal
 - Morocco and Algeria
 - France and Germany
 - Greece and Macedonia
- 4) Where were the Moors from?
 - Northern Africa
 - Germany
 - Scandinavia
 - Greece
 - Mongolia
- 5) About how long did the Reconquista last?
 - 50 years
 - 100 years
 - 300 years
 - 500 years
 - 700 years
- 6) What year did the Reconquista end?
 - 711
 - 718
 - 933
 - 1215
 - 1492
- 7) Who were the Spanish monarchs who finally defeated the Moors and ended the Reconquista?
 - Matilda and Henry
 - Mary and Louis
 - Isabella and Ferdinand
 - Eleanor and Richard
 - Margaret and Edward
- 8) What was the last area of land that was conquered by the Christians to end the Reconquista?
 - Aragon
 - Castile
 - Leon
 - Granada
 - Gibraltar
- 9) Who captured Valencia from the Moors and is considered the national hero of Spain?
 - Alfonso II
 - El Cid
 - Ferdinand
 - Isabella
 - Fernando
- 10) What famous explorer did Ferdinand and Isabella authorize an expedition for in 1492?
 - Christopher Columbus
 - Marco Polo
 - Hernan Cortes
 - Ferdinand Magellan
 - Vasco da Gama