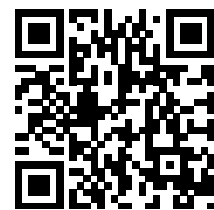


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# European Exploration in the Caribbean



In the late 15th century, \_\_\_\_\_ set out to explore the world, marking the beginning of a new era. Led by famous explorers like Christopher \_\_\_\_\_, they sailed across unknown seas in search of new routes to Asia. Instead, they stumbled upon the \_\_\_\_\_ islands, a diverse and rich region that was home to various Indigenous \_\_\_\_\_. These explorers were sponsored by European monarchs who were eager to expand their \_\_\_\_\_ and wealth. The arrival of Europeans had a profound impact on the \_\_\_\_\_ populations, leading to significant cultural exchanges and, unfortunately, many negative \_\_\_\_\_. Diseases brought by the Europeans decimated Indigenous communities, and the \_\_\_\_\_ trade began to take root as colonizers sought labor for their new \_\_\_\_\_. Despite these hardships, the Caribbean region became a melting pot of \_\_\_\_\_, languages, and traditions. European settlements sprouted up on several islands, establishing \_\_\_\_\_ that would influence the Caribbean for centuries to come. The sugarcane \_\_\_\_\_ became the backbone of the Caribbean economy, requiring a massive labor force that was largely filled by \_\_\_\_\_ brought against their will. This period also saw the rise of \_\_\_\_\_, as the lucrative trade routes attracted those looking to capitalize on the region's \_\_\_\_\_. The European exploration of the Caribbean set the stage for the modern \_\_\_\_\_, shaping global trade, navigation, and cultural exchanges that continue to influence us today.

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