

COLUMBUS AND DISEASE

Question: Did Columbus bring disease to the New World?

Answer: Genocide is defined as the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic group or nation. While many indigenous people did die as a result of their initial contact with Europeans, Columbus did not deliberately exterminate these tribes. Domesticated and draft animals were not present among the native peoples, and when they were introduced to the New World, the native populations did not have immunities to the illnesses these animals carried. Many historians agree that these animals would have reached America at some point, regardless of Columbus's involvement. Plagues existed before, during, and after Columbus.

What you should know:

- Louis Pasteur's germ theory, published in 1861, proved the link between bacteria and diseases. Until this theory was developed, no one knew what germs were and how they could affect human health. Columbus and his contemporaries, therefore, could not have deliberately spread diseases that they themselves did not understand.
- Before Columbus's arrival, the indigenous tribes did not have a written language, therefore the history of any plague in the New World is unknown until approximately 1492. The beginning date of any plague to hit the native tribes is recorded around when Columbus first landed because his arrival gave the indigenous peoples the opportunity to learn written language. This is why many people attribute the arrival of plagues and diseases in the New World to Columbus.
- Historic revisionists label plagues, such as contagious diseases, as "genocide."



They argue that “European” diseases nearly killed entire tribes; however, there is only one disease that they are talking about: smallpox. Smallpox may have occurred among the inhabitants of Egypt more than 3,000 years ago, which predates any other reliable reference to the disease elsewhere in the ancient world by more than 1,000 years.

- It is pure speculation to say that smallpox, or other diseases, were introduced to the New World by Europeans. When sickness happens, it happens. Plagues did kill large populations of indigenous people, but they also did the same throughout the entire world over the course of history.
- Many of the diseases attributed to Columbus actually happened in places where he never set foot—such as Mexico.
- Indigenous tribes did, in fact, experience diseases. Some tribes ate poisonous animals, some were sexually promiscuous, some practiced cannibalism, and others performed human sacrifices. The tribes were not as technologically advanced in science and in medicine as the Europeans were; therefore, there is no reason for anyone to think they ever experienced plagues or epidemics before Columbus’s arrival.

SOURCES:

Christopher Columbus The Hero: Defending Columbus From Modern Day Revisionism by Rafael Ortiz. Create Space, 2017.

Columbus Day vs Indigenous Peoples’ Day: The Truth Behind the Anti-Columbus Movement by Rafael Ortiz, Create Space, 2018.

Christopher Columbus and the Christian Church: And Why He Matters to Believers Today by Rafael Ortiz, Create Space, 2019.

