

# Islamic Empires

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. Muslim armies conquered many lands into which Islam slowly spread.
2. Trade helped Islam spread into new areas.
3. Three Muslim empires ruled large areas of Asia and Africa and parts of Europe from the 1400s to the 1800s.

### The Big Idea

After the early spread of Islam, three large Islamic empires formed—the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal.

### Key Terms and People

Abu Bakr, p. 362

caliph, p. 362

Janissaries, p. 364


Mehmed II, p. 364

Suleyman I, p. 364

Shia, p. 365

Sunni, p. 365

tolerance, p. 366

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### TAKING NOTES

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on the spread of Islam and the three Islamic empires that were created after Muhammad's death.

## If YOU were there...

You are a farmer living in a village on the coast of India. For centuries, your people have raised cotton and spun its fibers into a soft fabric. One day, a ship arrives in the harbor carrying Muslim traders from far away. They bring interesting goods you have never seen before. They also bring new ideas.

## What ideas might you learn from the traders?

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** You know that for years traders traveled through Arabia to markets far away. Along the way, they picked up new goods and ideas, and they introduced these to the people they met. Some of the new ideas the traders spread were Islamic ideas.

## Muslim Armies Conquer Many Lands

After Muhammad's death his followers quickly chose **Abu Bakr** (UH-boo BAK-uh), one of Muhammad's first converts, to be the next leader of Islam. He was the first **caliph** (KAY-luhf), a title that Muslims use for the highest leader of Islam. In Arabic, the word *caliph* means "successor." As Muhammad's successors, the caliphs had to follow the prophet's example. This meant ruling according to the Qur'an. Unlike Muhammad, however, early caliphs were not religious leaders.

## Beginnings of an Empire

Abu Bakr directed a series of battles to unite Arabia. By his death in 634, he had made Arabia into a unified Muslim state. With Arabia united, Muslim leaders turned their attention elsewhere. Their armies, strong after their battles in Arabia, won many stunning victories. They defeated the Persian and Byzantine empires, which were weak from many years of fighting.

When the Muslims conquered lands, they set certain rules for non-Muslims living there. For example, some non-Muslims could not build new places of worship or dress like Muslims. Only Christians and Jews could continue to practice their own religions. Although not forced to convert to Islam, they were second-class citizens.

## Growth of the Empire

Many early caliphs came from the Umayyad (oom-EYE-yuhd) family. The Umayyads moved the capital to Damascus, in Muslim-conquered Syria, and continued to expand the empire. They took over lands in Central Asia and in northern India. The Umayyads also gained control of trade in the eastern Mediterranean and conquered parts of North Africa.

The Berbers, the native people of North Africa, resisted Muslim rule at first. After years of fighting, however, many Berbers converted to Islam.

In 711 a combined Arab and Berber army invaded Spain and quickly conquered it. Next the army moved into what is now France, but it was stopped by a Christian army near the city of Tours (TOOR). Despite this defeat, Muslims called Moors ruled parts of Spain for the next 700 years.

A new Islamic dynasty, the Abbasids (uh-BAS-idz), came to power in 749. They reorganized the government to make it easier to rule such a large region.

**READING CHECK** Analyzing What role did armies play in spreading Islam?

## Trade Helps Islam Spread

Islam gradually spread through areas the Muslims conquered. Trade also helped spread Islam. Along with their goods, Arab merchants took Islamic beliefs to India, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Though Indian kingdoms remained Hindu, coastal trading cities soon had large Muslim communities. In Africa, societies often had both African and Muslim customs. Many African leaders converted to Islam. Between 1200 and 1600, Muslim traders carried Islam east to what are now Malaysia and Indonesia.

Trade also brought new products to Muslim lands. For example, Arabs learned from the Chinese how to make paper and use gunpowder. New crops such as cotton, rice, and oranges arrived from India, China, and Southeast Asia.

Many Muslim merchants traveled to African market towns too. They wanted African products such as ivory, cloves, and slaves. In return they offered fine white pottery called porcelain from China, cloth goods from India, and iron from Southwest Asia and Europe. Arab traders grew wealthy from trade between regions.

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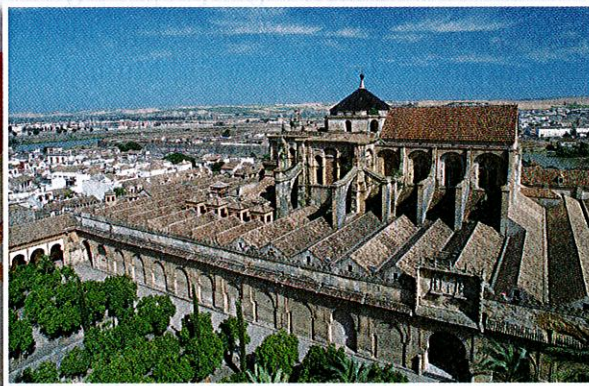
**ANIMATED HISTORY**

Muslim World, AD 1200

**THE IMPACT TODAY**

Indonesia now has the largest Muslim population in the world.

## The City of Córdoba



By the early 900s, Córdoba, Spain, was one of the wealthiest cities in Europe and a center of Islamic learning. Rich examples of Islamic architecture can still be seen in the city.

## A Mix of Cultures

As Islam spread through trade and warfare, Arabs came into contact with people who had different beliefs and lifestyles than they did. Muslims generally banned or controlled religious activities of the people they conquered. The Muslims did not ban all other religions in their lands. Because they shared some beliefs with Muslims, Christians and Jews in particular kept many of their rights. They did, however, have to pay a special tax. Members of both faiths were also forbidden from converting anyone to their religion.

Many people conquered by the Arabs converted to Islam. These people often adopted other parts of Arabic culture, including the Arabic language. The Arabs, in turn, adopted some customs from the people they conquered. This cultural blending changed Islam from a mostly Arab religion into a religion of many cultures. But the Arabic language and shared religion helped unify the different groups of the Islamic world.

## The Growth of Cities

The growing cities of the Muslim world reflected the blending of cultures. Trade had brought people together and created wealth, which supported great cultural development in Muslim cities.

Baghdad, in what is now Iraq, became the capital of the Islamic Empire in 762. Trade and farming made Baghdad one of the world's richest cities. Caliphs at Baghdad supported science and the arts. The city was a center of culture and learning.

Córdoba (KAWR-doh-bah), in Spain, became another showplace of Muslim civilization. By the early 900s Córdoba was the largest and most advanced city in Europe.

**READING CHECK** Finding the Main Idea How did trade affect the spread of Islam?

## Three Muslim Empires

The great era of Arab Muslim expansion lasted until the 1100s. Afterward, three non-Arab Muslim groups built large, powerful empires that ruled large areas in Asia and Africa and parts of Europe.

### The Ottoman Empire

In the mid-1200s Muslim Turkish warriors known as Ottomans began to take territory from the Christian Byzantine Empire. They eventually ruled land from eastern Europe to North Africa and Arabia.

The key to the empire's expansion was the Ottoman army. The Ottomans trained Christian boys from conquered towns to be soldiers. These **slave soldiers, called Janissaries, converted to Islam and became fierce warriors.** The Ottomans also benefitted from their use of new gunpowder weapons.

In 1453 Ottomans led by **Mehmed II** used huge cannons to conquer Constantinople. With the city's capture, Mehmed defeated the Byzantine Empire. He became known as "the Conqueror." Mehmed made Constantinople, which the Ottomans called Istanbul, his new capital. He also turned the Byzantines' great church, Hagia Sophia, into a mosque.

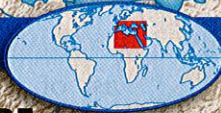
A later sultan, or Ottoman ruler, continued Mehmed's conquests. He expanded the empire to the east through the rest of Anatolia, another name for Asia Minor. His armies also conquered Syria and Egypt. The holy cities of Mecca and Medina then accepted Ottoman rule.

The Ottoman Empire reached its height under **Suleyman I** (soo-lay-MAHN), "the Magnificent." During his rule from 1520 to 1566, the Ottomans took control of the eastern Mediterranean and pushed farther into Europe, areas they would control until the early 1800s.

### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**development**  
the process of growing or improving

# The Ottoman Empire



■ Ottoman lands in 1300  
■ Territory added, 1300–1450  
■ Territory added, 1451–1519  
■ Territory added, 1520–1683

0 200 400 Miles  
 0 200 400 Kilometers



## BIOGRAPHY

**Mehmed II**  
1432–1481

Mehmed II ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1451 to 1481. During this time he greatly improved the new capital, Istanbul. He repaired damage caused by fighting and built palaces, mosques, and a huge, covered bazaar. He encouraged people from all over the empire to move to the city.

**Drawing Inferences** Why do you think Mehmed II encouraged people to move to Istanbul?

**GEOGRAPHY SKILLS** **INTERPRETING MAPS**

**Location** What region was at the heart, or center, of the Ottoman Empire?

## The Safavid Empire

As the Ottoman Empire reached its height, a group of Persian Muslims known as the Safavids (sah-FAH-vuhds) was gaining power to the east, in the area of present-day Iran. Before long, the Safavids came into conflict with the Ottomans and other Muslims.

The conflict arose from an old disagreement among Muslims about who should be caliph. In the mid-600s, Islam split into two groups. The two groups were the Shia (SHEE-ah) and the Sunni (SOO-nee). The Shia were

Muslims who thought that only Muhammad's descendants could become caliphs. The Sunni didn't think caliphs had to be related to Muhammad. The Ottomans were Sunnis and the Safavid leaders were Shia.

The Safavid Empire began in 1501 when the Safavid leader Esma'il (is-mah-EEL) conquered Persia. He took the ancient Persian title of shah, or king.

Esma'il made Shiism—the beliefs of the Shia—the official religion of the empire. But he wanted to spread Shiism farther.

**THE IMPACT TODAY**

Most Muslims today belong to the Sunni branch of Islam.

He tried to gain more Muslim lands and convert more Muslims to Shiism. He battled the Uzbek people, but he suffered a crushing defeat by the Ottomans in 1514.

In 1588 the greatest Safavid leader, 'Abbas, became shah. He strengthened the military and gave his soldiers modern gunpowder weapons. Copying the Ottomans, 'Abbas trained foreign slave boys to be soldiers. Under 'Abbas's rule the Safavids defeated the Uzbeks and took back land that had been lost to the Ottomans.

The Safavids blended Persian and Muslim cultural traditions. They built beautiful mosques in their capital, Esfahan (es-fah-HAHN), and grew wealthy from trade. The Safavid Empire lasted until the mid-1700s.

## The Mughal Empire

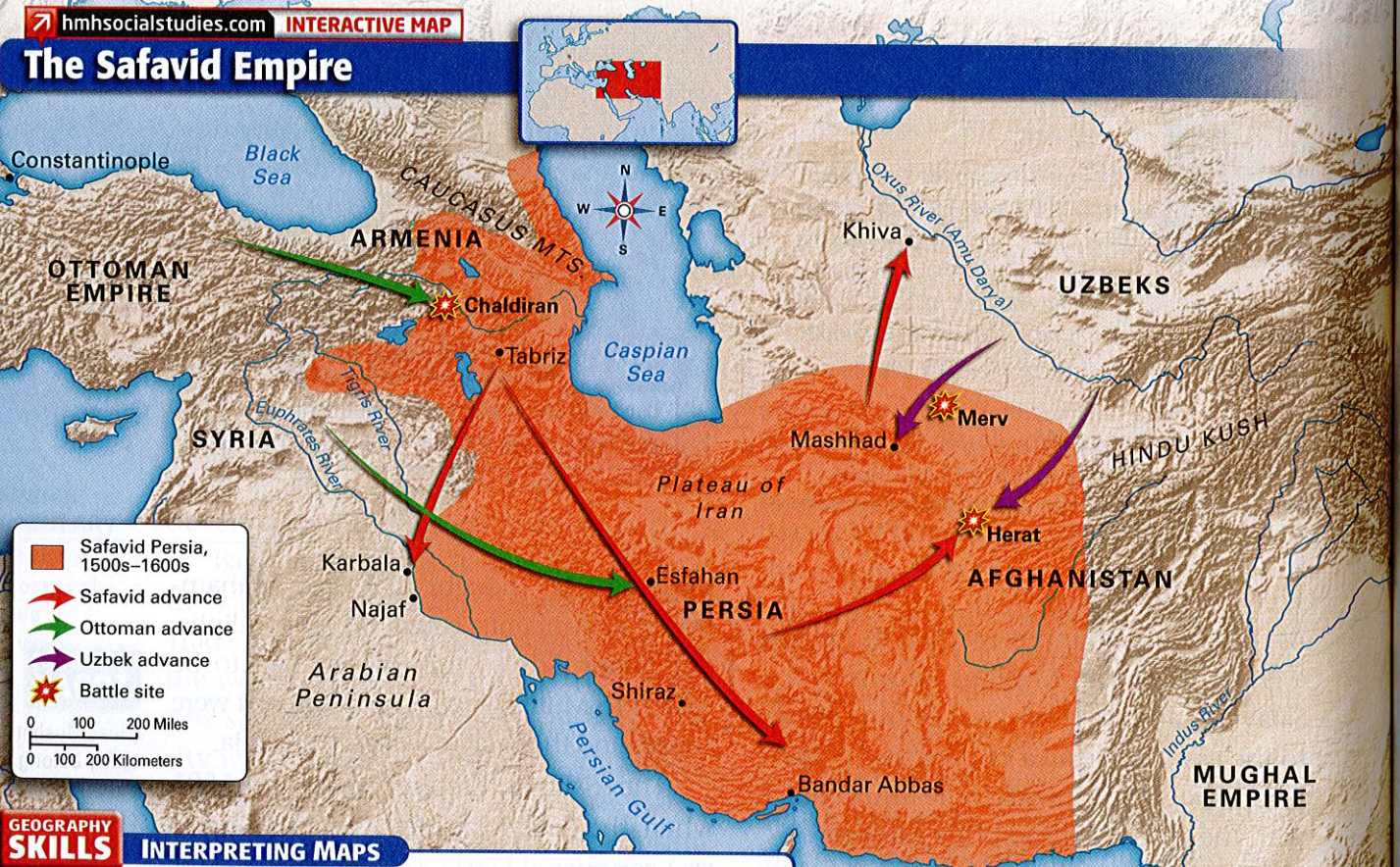
East of the Safavid Empire, in northern India, lay the Mughal (MOO-guhl) Empire. The Mughals were Turkish Muslims from Central Asia. Their empire was established in 1526 by Babur (BAH-boohr).

In the mid-1500s an emperor named Akbar conquered many new lands and worked to strengthen the Mughal government. He also began a tolerant religious policy, ending the tax on non-Muslims.

Akbar's **tolerance**, or acceptance, allowed Muslims and Hindus in the empire to live in peace. In time, a unique Mughal culture developed that blended Persian, Islamic, and Hindu elements. The Mughals became known for their monumental works of

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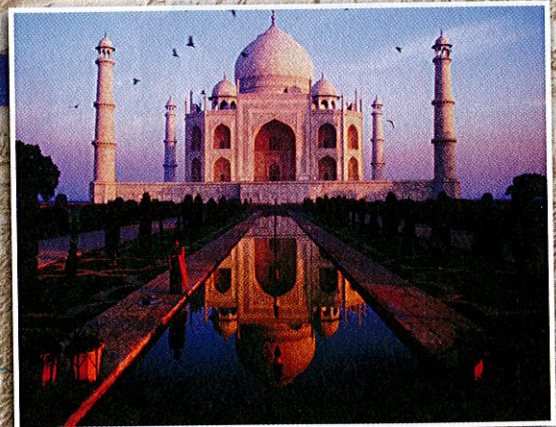
## The Safavid Empire



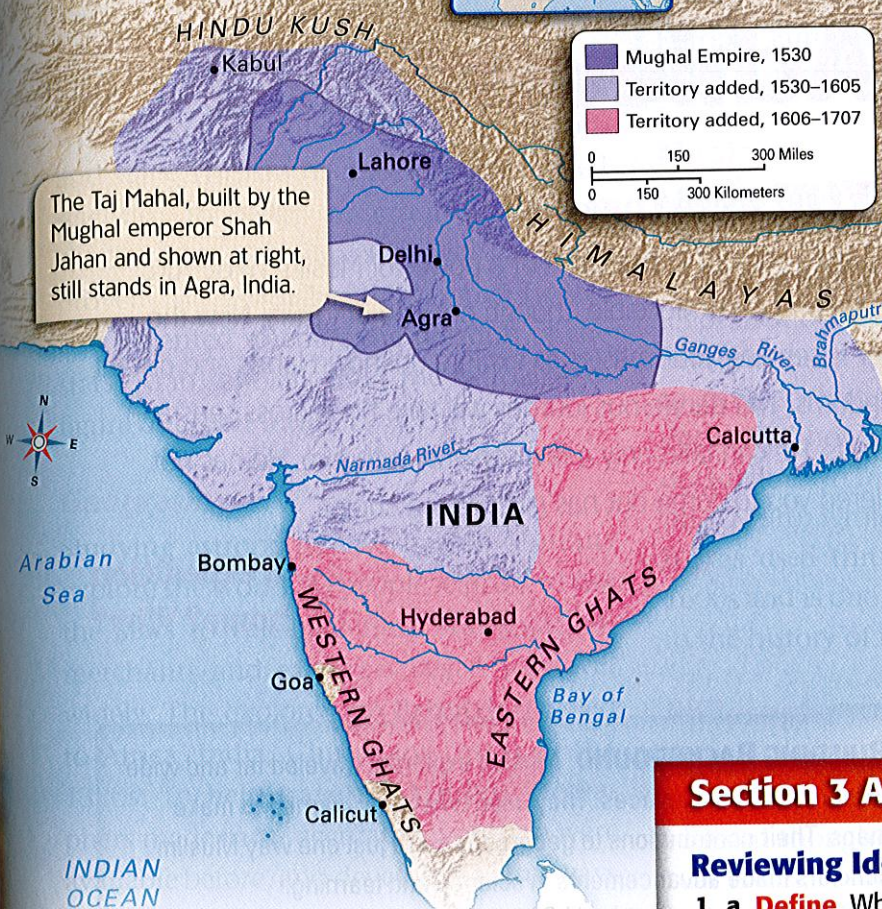
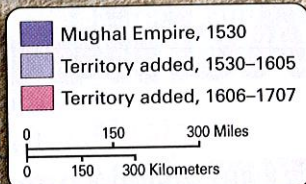
### GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

- Place** What large plateau is located in the heart of the Safavid Empire?
- Movement** Which two groups advanced into Safavid territory?

# The Mughal Empire



The Taj Mahal, built by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and shown at right, still stands in Agra, India.



## GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Region** In what present-day country was the Mughal Empire located?
- 2. Place** What two landforms acted as a natural northern border for the Mughal Empire?

architecture—particularly the Taj Mahal, a tomb built in the 1600s by emperor Shah Jahan.

In the late 1600s, an emperor reversed Akbar's tolerant policies. He destroyed many Hindu temples, and violent revolts broke out. The Mughal Empire soon fell apart.

**READING CHECK Analyzing** How did the Ottomans gain land for their empire?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** Islam spread beyond Arabia through warfare and trade. The Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals built great empires and continued the spread of Islam. In Section 4, you will learn about the cultural achievements of the Islamic world.

## Section 3 Assessment

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ONLINE QUIZ

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- Define** What is a **caliph**?
  - Evaluate** Do you think the rules that Muslims made for conquered non-Muslims were fair? Why or why not?
- Identify** Name three places Islam spread to through trade.
  - Explain** How did trade help spread Islam?
- Recall** Who were the **Janissaries**?
  - Contrast** How did Sunni and Shia beliefs about caliphs differ?

### Critical Thinking

- 4. Comparing and Contrasting** Draw a chart like the one below. Use your notes to compare and contrast characteristics of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires.

	Ottomans	Safavids	Mughals
Leaders			
Location			
Religious policy			

### FOCUS ON WRITING

- 5. Writing about Islamic Empires** Review this section and write a paragraph about the three powerful Islamic empires that began to form in the 1200s.