The Columbian Exchange

THE EARLY MODERN WORLD (1450 – 1750)
The Columbian Exchange is the transfer of peoples, animals, plants, and diseases between the Old World (the known world before Columbus' voyage) and the New World.
To the Old World

• Maize, potatoes, manioc (cassava or yucca) revolutionized agriculture and diets in parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa.

• When grown they provided more calories per acre than did most of the old world crops –

• Beans, squash, tomatoes, peanuts, and chocolate also gained acceptance in the old world.
To the New World

• Just a short time after contact European staples like wheat, olives, and grapes were being grown in the Americas.

• African and Asian crops like rice, bananas, sugarcane, and breadfruit were introduced.
• Animals such as cattle, pigs, horses, sheep, rats, and rabbits also found their way into the New World – and with few natural predators multiplied quickly.
• Wild cattle on the plains of South America (Argentina) and the American southwest provided indigenous groups with an abundant supply of meat and hides.

• The horse provided groups like the Apache and the Sioux to more efficiently hunt buffalo.

• Even in the areas where Europeans had settled, Amerindians learned to become cowboys and sheepherders.
• The transfer of disease had a dramatic negative impact on the Americas.
• Smallpox, measles, and influenza killed off somewhere between 75 – 90% of Amerindians.
• By the mid 17th century (1600s) malaria and yellow fever also had a presence in tropical regions. However, this is also struck Europeans.
Quick Video

The Columbian Exchange: Crash Course World History #23

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQPA5oNpfM4