

Module 7: The Islamic Civilization
Topic 3 Content: Trade in the Islamic Civilization

Introduction



Click the NEXT button to learn about trade in the Islamic civilization.

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Currency

CURRENCY

Basic Islamic coins were the golden dinar and the silver dirham.



Large transactions were often made using a piece of paper called suftaja.

Moneychangers often made transactions at community bazaars, or souks where people could buy basic goods, delicacies, and pets.

Image: Golden dinar from the Umayyad caliphate

Basic Islamic coins were the golden dinar and the silver dirham, but large transactions were often made using a piece of paper called suftajah. Much easier to carry on long trade routes than heavy coins, suftajahs were used similar to modern credit cards. Merchants could take the papers to a moneychanger and exchange them for coins to spend on goods. These transactions were often conducted at community bazaars, or souks, where people could buy basic goods like sugar, salt, textiles, spices, gold, and horses; or delicacies like foods from Europe and Asia, Chinese porcelain or silk, or even exotic pets.

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Caravans

CARAVANS

Goods came from Mecca, Medina, Constantinople, Baghdad, Marrakesh, Cairo, and Cordoba.

Caravans provided goods, services, and protection.

After traveling all day, caravans stopped at caravanserai.

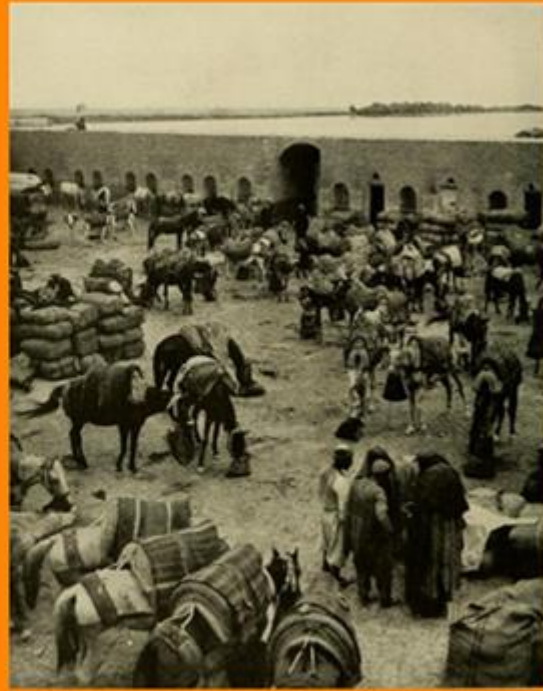


Image: Caravanserai in Falluja, Iraq in 1914

Caravans would bring goods from the major Islamic trading cities of Mecca, Medina, Constantinople, Baghdad, Marrakesh, Cairo, and Cordoba. Caravans provided goods and services, as well as protection for merchants. Typically, caravans travelled fifteen miles a day, and stopped at night at an oasis, or rest stop, called a caravanserai.

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Slaves

SLAVES

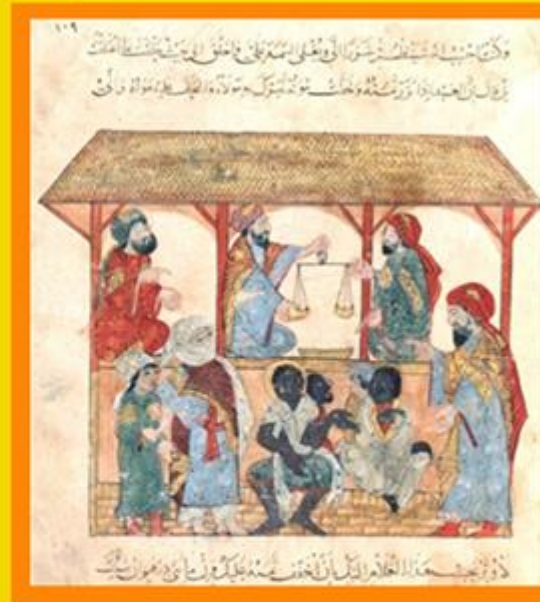
People were traded through trade routes.

The Qu'ran says freedom is natural but slavery exists.

People were not enslaved based on race or ethnicity.

Enslaving Muslims was forbidden, mistreatment of slaves was banned, and seeking avenues for freeing slaves was encouraged.

Image: 13th century slave market in Yemen



Similar to many other societies throughout history, people were also traded through the Islamic trade routes. While the Qu'ran expresses that freedom is a natural state for humans, it also acknowledges the existence of slavery. Muslims enslaved people from many cultures, and enslavement was not based on race or ethnicity. However, enslaving Muslims was forbidden, mistreatment of slaves was banned, and seeking avenues for freeing slaves was encouraged. Some communities allowed slaves to own businesses and property, and eventually earn social status.

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The Spread of Islam

SPREAD

A huge trading network resulted from the spread of Islam.

Muslim populations grew in India, China, Spain, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Modern day Indonesia has the largest concentration of practitioners in the world.

The Qu'ran being in Arabic helped Islam spread through a common language.

Image: Grand Mosque of Demak, the first Muslim state in Java



This huge trading network resulted from the spread of the Islamic religion. Specifically, traders brought Islam to West Africa, where it quickly spread throughout the region. Muslim populations also grew in India, China, Spain, Malaysia, and Indonesia. In fact, the modern day nation of Indonesia is home to thirteen percent of the world's Muslims, the largest concentration of practitioners in the world. Since the common language of Islam was Arabic, as written in the Qu'ran, this helped the religion spread as much as trade routes and war.

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Conclusion

**TRADE
IN THE
ISLAMIC
CIVILIZATION**



You have reached the end of this interactivity.

Restart

Exit

You have reached the end of this interactivity.