

ABEL TASMAN

Who is Abel Tasman?

Abel Janszoon Tasman was a Dutch explorer and navigator who led an expedition to the South and East land, now known as Australia and South America. He was born in 1603 and died in 1659 at the age of 56.

How and why Abel Tasman explored?

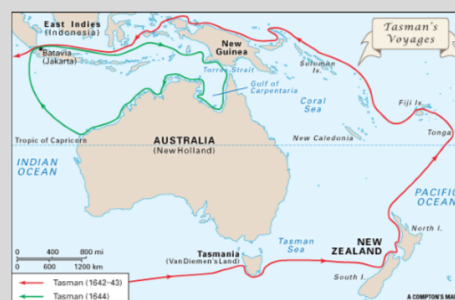
Abel Tasman explored for the Dutch East Indian Company. On his first voyage, Abel Tasman explored because the company wanted to find out whether there was a sea passage across the Pacific ocean to Chile, or whether there was still unexplored land. He was instructed to explore the Indian Ocean from West to East, but South of the ordinary trade route. Abel Tasman explored by sea using two small ships. One was named Heemskerck and the other was named Zeehaen. His flagship was Heemskerck, and he had an armed transport ship which was Zeehaen. On Abel Tasman's second voyage in 1644, he still worked for the Dutch East Indian Company. They thought that he came back from his first exploration with great results, so he was instructed to do it again. This time the company wanted to find out the relationships between New Guinea and Western Australia. Abel still explored by sea, but this time used three ships for his second voyage. The ships were named Limmen, Zeemeeuw and Braek.

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Abel Tasman



Map of Abel Tasman's voyages.



Abel Tasman's boat, Heemskerck, on his first voyage

Where and when did Abel Tasman explore?

Abel Tasman was asked to go on a voyage in service of the Dutch East Indian Company. He left in August 1642 and first spotted Tasmania on November 24th. Abel Tasman originally named Tasmania, 'Van Diemen's Land.'

On the 13th of December Abel spotted the north west coast of the South Island, New Zealand. He became the first European to sight this country. Originally Abel named New Zealand 'Staten Landt.'

Abel became convinced that there was a sea passage to Chile. This was because of the swell. On his voyage home, he discovered Tonga. This was on the 21st of January 1643.

After sailing on, Abel Tasman sighted the Fiji Islands on February 6. His ships became close to being wrecked from dangerous reefs, around the Island. But Abel still sailed on. His last discovery was New Guinea before arriving back home on June 15th 1643.

In 1644 Abel Tasman went on a second voyage. This was still for the Dutch East Indian Company. He followed the south coast of New Guinea but didn't land. Abel then sailed on. He only mapped the north coast of Australia and made observations of the people and the land. From the view of the Dutch East Indian Company, his voyage was deemed a disappointment.

This was because he didn't find a promising area for trade or a useful shipping route.

The challenges Abel Tasman faced and how he responded.

- Abel Tasman was asked to go on a voyage for the Dutch East Indian Company. They wanted to find out whether there was a sea passage across the Pacific Ocean to Chile. The challenge was for Abel Tasman to come home with information or news for the company. Abel Tasman responded to this challenge by heading in one direction until he sighted land. He kept track of anything interesting he seen. This would have helped him report his voyage.
- Abel Tasman had to make a huge decision to go on the voyage. He had to think about many factors that could affect his life or the sailing. One of the most important factors Abel had to consider, was his survival. The voyage could have made or break his life. Abel Tasman responded to the challenge by taking two ships. He had one armed ship and one flagship. Both ships took extra water and food for survival.
- When Abel Tasman landed at Murderers Bay in New Zealand (known now as Golden Bay) he had a tense but peaceful encounter with the Maori. The following day one of Abel's boats were rammed by the Tumatakokiri tribe by their waka. Abel Tasman responded to this challenge by firing a shot at the waka. One of the Maoris were hit. Abel Tasman and his crew left immediately after the encounter and headed towards the Cook Strait.
- On the voyage home, Abel's ships became close to being wrecked on dangerous reefs. This was near the Fiji Islands. He responded to the challenge by making close observations and notes about the area. This information would have been used if any other voyages were around that area. Abel would have taken extreme caution to navigate the area.
- The Dutch East Indian Company decided Abel Tasman's first expedition went well, so they thought he could do it again. Abel was under pressure to return with positive information and have another successful result. He responded to the challenge by taking three boats. This was for extra protection. Abel used the same routines as the first voyage, because it was a success.