

Iberia ^[1]

Type of Speech:

noun ^[2]

Definition:

Europe's southwestern peninsula, including the nations of Spain and Portugal. The Iberian peninsula, on Europe's westernmost extremity, was conquered repeatedly by the Berbers, Celts, Romans, Visigoths, and Muslim Arabs or "moors". The indigenous Basque language, along with Latin, Arabic and Gothic formed several languages including Portuguese, Galician, Catalan, and Spanish (or Castilian). Gradually, the Spanish ousted the Muslims in a long process known as the reconquista which led to a religiously intolerant society that was opposed to local Islamic and Jewish communities even while it was culturally indebted to both. Spain and Portugal emerged as powerful states, poised to sail to Africa and to the fabled "Indies." As everyone knows, Columbus discovered the New World instead of Asia. The same year, 1492, saw the Spanish armies take Granada after a long siege. The professional soldiery was diverted to the promised splendors of Mexico, and shortly, Peru. Iberian culture and food crops, animals, religion, and notoriously, diseases, were introduced to the Americas. The Spanish initially exploited the empires they overthrew for gold and silver, but gradually a different colonial order emerged.

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