

Timeline: Islam in the Middle Ages

8.4.3
b

c. 570	Birth of Muhammad (Mohammed) in Mecca
622	The Hijrah (Hegira) or "Flight": Muhammad flees to Medina because of opposition in Mecca (first year of the Muslim calendar).
630	Muhammad returns to Mecca and conquers the city. Mecca becomes the centre of Islam.
632	Muhammad dies; by this time most of Arabia has become Muslim.
632–650	This is the period of the "Rightly Guided Caliphs" or successors to Muhammad as rulers of the Arab empire, centred in Mecca and Medina. During this time the official text of the Koran is established in Arabic.
636	Muslims conquer Syria (under Omar, the second caliph).
637	Muslims conquer Persia and Jerusalem (under Omar, the second caliph).
641	Muslims conquer Alexandria (Egypt) (under Omar, the second caliph).
661–750	The Omayyad caliphs rule the Muslim empire, centred in Damascus.
711	Arab Muslims conquer Spain.
717–718	Muslims attempt to conquer Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire. They also advance in western Europe as far as France (Franks stop their advance).
750	Abbasids become rulers of Muslim Empire with Baghdad as centre; the Golden Age of Islam begins. Under the Abbasid caliphates, the Muslims build the first astronomical observatory, translate ancient Greek texts into Arabic, perfect and spread the Arabic alphabet and Arab numerals, develop the astrolabe for navigation, develop a body of Arabic literature and history, make advances in agriculture, improve water distribution, make advances in medicine and health care, develop agriculture and livestock breeding, spread cotton from east to west. The Abbasids, although Muslim, allow freedom of religion in areas under their control.
751	Arab Empire attacks China: Arabs learn papermaking from Chinese prisoners of war. Papermaking helps advance learning throughout the Arab world through books.

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765	A school of medicine is established in Baghdad.
c. 800–1100	Arabs establish regular trade caravans from across northern Africa; they gradually extend routes across the Sahara desert into the West African kingdoms of Mali and Ghana for the gold and salt trade. Arab trade network becomes very prosperous and facilitates the exchange of ideas and technologies among societies with which they trade.
1055	Seljuk Turks, who are Muslim converts living in Central Asia, begin to move into territories of the Byzantine Empire. Conflicts and hostilities erupt between Christians and Muslims.
1096	Crusades begin: Pope Urban II of Rome calls for all Christians to expel Muslims from Jerusalem and its surrounding region (considered Holy Land as it was the area in which Jesus Christ lived) and from the Byzantine Empire.
1258	Mongols sack Baghdad, killing the caliph and many Muslims: end of the Abbasid caliphs.
1299	The Ottoman dynasty is founded under Osman I in Asia Minor (Turkey). Osman rules until 1326.
1291	End of Crusades: Muslims defeat Christians and remain in Holy Lands.
1453	Ottoman Turks conquer Constantinople under the rule of Muhammad II, ending the Byzantine Empire. The city is renamed Istanbul, and becomes the capital of the Ottoman Empire.
1520–1566	Suleyman the Magnificent rules as Sultan of the Ottoman empire and increases its territory. The Empire reaches its peak in culture, art, literature, architecture, and laws. The Ottoman empire exists until the end of World War I (1918).

