

PIRATES & BURIED TREASURE

Now, I'm sure we have all seen a movie or two when a one-eyed, peg-leg pirate finds a great big wooden chest full of gold, silver, and jewels! Thanks to the famous novel 'Treasure Island,' a book about pirates, most people think that the pirates were best known for burying treasure on remote islands. In fact, it was quite rare for a pirate to find a chest full of treasure, however treasure hunters and the physical search for shipwrecks and retrieving artifacts with great market value still exists today!



TREASURE MAPS

A treasure map is a variation of a map to mark the location of buried treasure in a remote place, a lost mine, a valuable secret or a hidden location. With an "X" marking the spot where the treasure could be found, pirate treasure maps were created with the intentions of making their way back to the treasure. A pirate known to have buried treasure was Captain William Kidd, he's one of the few known to have done so!

Over the years many different people have said to have discovered maps and other clues that have led them to pirate treasure, or claim that historical maps are actually treasure maps.

PIRATES

Pirates were brutal sea-thieves and bold adventurers who paid for their travel by theft at sea in search for all things valuable. For centuries, pirates have sailed across the seas and oceans of the world. Some groups of pirates have been called by different names, such as corsairs, and most have terrorised certain areas, including the pirates of the Caribbean! Pirates flew unique flags; the most famous pirate flag was the Jolly Roger. The skull and crossbones of the Jolly Roger meant only thing, PIRATES!



THE NOTORIOUS PIRATE 'BLACKBEARD'

Edward 'Blackbeard' Teach is the most notorious pirate to ever have lived from what has become known as 'The Golden Age of Pirates'. Blackbeard preyed upon ships in the Caribbean and off the coast of Mexico and was famous for being one of the fiercest, ruthless, calculating and cunning of all pirates. As with many pirates, his life was short lived, however he had a great effect on history as his name is still recognised to this day. Blackbeard was born in England around 1680 and became a pirate towards the end of 1716.

Edward Teach became known as Blackbeard having grown a long black beard that he would twist into small tails and tie them with ribbons. He would light slow match fuses and hang them from under his hat, resulting smoke and sparks to make him appear intimidating. Blackbeard wore a sash across his body with three pairs of pistols. Blackbeard has been portrayed in many films such as Peter Pan, Pirates of the Caribbean and PAN. A character called Blackbeard also appeared in the popular video game Assassins Creed IV. Many treasure hunters have spent time searching for Blackbeard's hidden gold. However, most historians think it is unlikely that he ever buried any of his treasure.



SHIPWRECKS

When a ship meets with an accident and sinks to the ocean floor, it is said to be a shipwreck. How do shipwrecks happen? Usually shipwrecks are a result of a wild storm or by enemy attacks during the war.

It is estimated that there are 3 million shipwrecks on our oceans floors. Considering 70 percent of the Earth's surface is water, and the human race has only just begun to reach the depths, there is still 95 percent of the ocean that remains unknown to us. We know more about the surface of the moon than what lays at the bottom of our oceans.

Many shipwrecks are as old as 400BC. The most famous shipwreck to date is the Titanic, a 268.834 meter luxury cruise ship that hit an iceberg and sank in 1982.



UNDERWATER TREASURE HUNTERS

Indiana Jones may have been a fictional character but there have been a lot of famous and infamous treasure hunters in real-life too! Let's take a look at a few examples of treasure hunters, the real-life Indiana Jones's.



CHICKEN FARMER TO MILLIONAIRE MEL

Mel Fisher started out as a chicken farmer with a passion for underwater treasure hunting! Mel spent 16 years searching for the Nuestra Senora de Atocha which sank in 1622 off of Florida, USA while accumulating hundreds of thousands of dollars in coins, jewellery and gold bars that he found on the sea floor. Mel never lost faith that he would eventually find the ship and started every day with the mantra "This will be the day!" The shipwreck was finally located in 1985 by Mel's son, and over \$400 MILLION dollars' worth of treasure was recovered and shared between Mel's family, investors, and lawyers. The find of the Nuestra Senora de Atocha led directly to a law passed by Congress to prevent people from profiting from shipwrecks.

THE QUEENS JEWELS

When Brent Brisben and Eric Schmidt found \$1 Million Dollars in Spanish gold and silver coins on a shipwreck just off the coast of Florida, the pair kept it a secret. They knew that there was more treasure to be found nearby. Surely enough, just a few months later they discovered another find: an additional 350 coins - this time worth \$4.5 million! The ships they discovered together were from a fleet of 11 Spanish ships that sank during a hurricane in 1715. The coins were found in water that was only 1.8 meters deep near Vero Beach, meaning that people had been swimming around the coins for years!

