

The history of Spanish

Spanish and the languages of the empire 5/6

Narrator:

The history of Spanish in about 6 minutes. Chapter 5: Spanish and the languages of the Empire or - The Empire Strikes Tobacco.

Christopher Columbus arrived on an island in the West Indies and imaginatively named it La Española - this was the first contact between the Spanish language and more than 2000 languages of the Indigenous Americans.

As colonisation grew and Bourbon reforms enforced the use of Spanish. These 2000 indigenous languages shrunk to around 700.

The Spanish language at the same time grew richer. Languages like Nahuatl give tomatoes and chocolate. From Arahua we get guava. So today you can eat chocolate and guava, while experiencing altitude sickness (from Quechua).

The Real Academia Española focussed on standardising Spanish as spoken in Spain but nowadays there are 23 academies across the world that work together to promote alternate, equally valid forms of Spanish.

Spanish influence reaches across the globe. From America to Equatorial Guinea where Spanish is an official language. While in Tagalog, the language of the Philippines, the days of the week sound very familiar to Spanish speakers and creole languages like Chabacano are also derived from Spanish...Chabacano itself roughly means 'vulgar' which takes us right back to those Romans.