

The “Columbian Exchange”

One reason Columbus gets credit for discovering America is that America stayed discovered after Columbus’s voyages, at least from a European point of view (remember that there had been people here for tens of thousands of years before Columbus). Another reason is the exchange of plant and animal life, and diseases, that took place during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is often described as the “Columbian Exchange”:

Exported from America to Europe

avocados
cacao
cinchona (quinine)
coca
kidney beans
lima beans
manioc (tapioca)
papayas
peanuts
peppers
pineapples
pumpkins
sassafras
squash
tobacco
tomatoes

turkeys

syphilis?

Imported from Europe to America

bananas
barley
coffee
daisies
dandelions
grapes
“Kentucky” bluegrass
melons
oats
olives
rice
wheat

chickens?
cows
goats
horses
pigs
sheep

bubonic plague
influenza
measles
smallpox
typhus