

Strāyer 11. Peōple, Plāces & Things

- Abbasid caliphate:** Dynasty of caliphs who ruled an increasingly fragmented Islamic state from 750 to 1258, eventually becoming little more than figureheads. (*pron.* ah-BASS-id)
- Andalus, al-:** Arabic name for Spain (literally “the land of the Vandals”), most of which was conquered by Arab and Berber forces in the early eighth century C.E. (*pron.* al-AND-ah-loos)
- Anatolia:** Ancient name of Asia Minor, part of the Byzantine Empire that was gradually overrun by the Turks and that now is the Republic of Turkey. (*pron.* an-ah-TOLE-ee-yah)
- Battle of Talas River:** Arab victory over the Chinese in 751 C.E. that checked Chinese expansion to the west and enabled the conversion of Central Asia to Islam. (*pron.* tah-las)
- Bedouins:** Nomadic Arabs. (*pron.* BED-wins)
- dhimmis:** “Protected subjects” under Islamic rule, non-Muslims who were allowed to practice their faith as “people of the book” in return for their paying special taxes. (*pron.* DIM-ees)
- Ghazali, al-:** Great Muslim theologian, legal scholar, and Sufi mystic (1058–1111) who was credited with incorporating Sufism into mainstream Islamic thought. (*pron.* al-gha-ZAHL-ee)
- hadiths:** Traditions passed on about the sayings or actions of Muhammad and his immediate followers; hadiths rank second only to the Quran as a source of Islamic law. (*pron.* hah-DEETHS)
- hajj:** The pilgrimage to Mecca enjoined on every Muslim who is able to make the journey; one of the Five Pillars of Islam. (*pron.* HAHJ)
- hijra:** The “flight” of Muhammad and his original seventy followers from Mecca to Yathrib (later Medina) in 622 C.E.; the journey marks the starting point of the Islamic calendar. (*pron.* HIJ-ruh)
- House of Wisdom:** An academic center for research and translation of foreign texts that was established in Baghdad in 830 C.E. by the Abbasid caliph al-Mamun.
- Ibn Battuta:** Fourteenth-century Arab traveler (1304–1368) who wrote about his extensive journeys throughout the Islamic world. (*pron.* IB-uhn ba- TOO-tuh)
- Ibn Sina:** One of the greatest polymaths of the Islamic world (980–1037), a Persian who wrote prolifically on scientific (especially medical) and philosophical issues; he is often known as “Avicenna,” the Latinized form of his name. (*pron.* ibn SEE-nah)
- imams:** In Shia Islam, leaders with high religious authority; the twelve imams of early Shia Islam were Muhammad’s nephew Ali and his descendants. (*pron.* EE-mahms)
- jihād:** Arabic for “struggle,” this term describes both the spiritual striving of each Muslim toward a godly life and armed struggle against the forces of unbelief and evil. (*pron.* jee-HAHD)
- jizya:** Special tax paid by dhimmis in Muslim-ruled territory in return for freedom to practice their own religion. (*pron.* jeez-YAH)
- Kaaba:** Great stone shrine in Mecca that was a major pilgrimage center for worshippers of many different deities before it was reconsecrated to monotheistic use by Muhammad. (*pron.* KAH-bah)
- madrassas:** Formal colleges for higher instruction in the teachings of Islam as well as in secular subjects, founded throughout the Islamic world beginning in the eleventh century. (*pron.* MAH-dras-ahs)
- Mecca:** Key pilgrimage center in Arabia that became the birthplace of Islam.
- Mozarabs:** “Would-be Arabs” in Muslim-ruled Spain, referring to Christians who adopted much of Arabic culture and observed many Muslim practices without actually converting to Islam. (*pron.* MOH-zah-rabs)
- Muhammad Ibn Abdullah:** The Prophet of Islam (570–632 C.E.).
- Muslim:** Literally, “one who submits”; the name was adopted by Muhammad and his followers to describe their submission to God.
- Pillars of Islam:** The five core practices required of Muslims: a profession of faith, regular prayer, charitable giving, fasting during Ramadan, and a pilgrimage to Mecca (if financially and physically possible).
- Polo, Marco:** The most famous European traveler of the Middle Ages (1254–1324), whose travel account of his time in China was widely popular in Europe.
- Rightly Guided Caliphs:** The first four rulers of the Islamic world (632–661) after the death of Muhammad.
- Quran:** Also transliterated as Qur’ān and Koran, this is the most holy text of Islam, recording the revelations given to the prophet Muhammad. (*pron.* kuh- RAHN)
- sharia:** Islamic law, dealing with all matters of both secular and religious life. (*pron.* sha-REE-ah)

shaykhs: Sufi teachers who attracted a circle of disciples and often founded individual schools of Sufism. (*pron.* SHAKES)

Sikhism: A significant syncretic religion that evolved in India, blending elements of Islam and Hinduism; founded by Guru Nanak (1469–1539). (*pron.* SEEK-ism)

Sufis: Islamic mystics, many of whom were important missionaries of Islam in conquered lands and who were revered as saints. (*pron.* SOO-fees)

Sultanate of Delhi: Major Turkic Muslim state established in northern India in 1206. (*pron.* DEL-ee)

Timbuktu: Great city of West Africa, noted as a center of Islamic scholarship in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. (*pron.* tim-buk-TOO)

ulama: Islamic religious scholars. (*pron.* oo-leh-MAH)

Umayyad caliphate: Family of caliphs who ruled the Islamic world from 661 to 750 C.E. (*pron.* oo-MY-ad)

umma: The community of all believers in Islam. (*pron.* UM-mah)