AMERICAN TRADE NETWORKS

There was no sustained interaction between the Western and Eastern hemispheres before the voyages of Columbus.

American trade networks were not as dense as Afro-Eurasian ones.

- Important limitations:
  - Lack of domesticated large mammals, wheeled vehicles, large oceangoing ships
  - Geographical or environmental obstacles, including north/south orientation
  - Local and regional commerce flourished, but not long-distance trade
  - Cultural traditions did not spread as widely as in Eastern Hemisphere
LOOSELY INTERACTIVE WEB

From the Great Lakes to the Andes.

- Cultural elements spread gradually
- Evidence of at least indirect contact (games, building styles, pottery, etc. found in multiple regions)
- Gradual diffusion of maize from its origin in Mesoamerica
LOOSELY INTERACTIVE WEB

- Cahokia (near present-day St. Louis) was at the center of a widespread trading network in North America.
- Chaco Canyon (SW U.S.) culture also interacted with Mesoamerica (evidence of Mayan cultural traditions in New Mexico).
- Amazon and Orinoco river exchange networks were evident when European explorers arrived.
- Caribbean peoples conducted inter-island trade.
- Chincha people traded along Pacific coast of South America.
There was a major trade network in Mesoamerica.

- Maya and Teotihuacán traded by land
- Maya traded by sea on both coasts (with dugout canoes)
- Mostly luxury goods; critical to upholding the position and privileges of the royal and noble families; also was a motive for war among Mesoamerican states
- Aztecs of fifteenth century had professional merchants (pochteca)
TRADE IN THE ANDES

Inca trade during fifteenth century was run by the state

▪ No merchant groups
▪ Large storehouses recorded on quipus (knotted cords used to record numerical data) by highly trained accountants
▪ Incan road system provided goods throughout the empire
▪ Local exchange at highland fairs and along the borders