

The Columbian Exchange

Foods that
only existed
in the
Americas



"Chilli harvest" by [Graibeard](#) is licensed under CC BY.
Source: [Flickr](#).



"Tomatoes" by [Eve Dias](#) is licensed under CC BY. Source:
[Flickr](#).

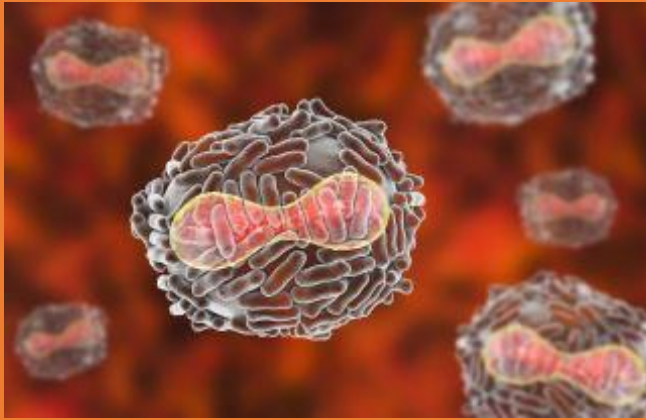


"Potatoes" by [Jeremy Keith](#) is licensed under CC BY.
Source: [Flickr](#).



"Chocolate Curls" by [Moya](#) is licensed under CC BY.
Source: [Flickr](#).





Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (1972)

From the Americas to Africa and Eurasia

- beans
 - cacao
 - cassava (manioc)
 - chilies
 - maize (corn)
 - peanuts
 - pineapples
 - potatoes
- squash
 - sweet potatoes
 - Syphilis [debated]
 - tobacco
 - tomatoes
 - turkeys
 - vanilla

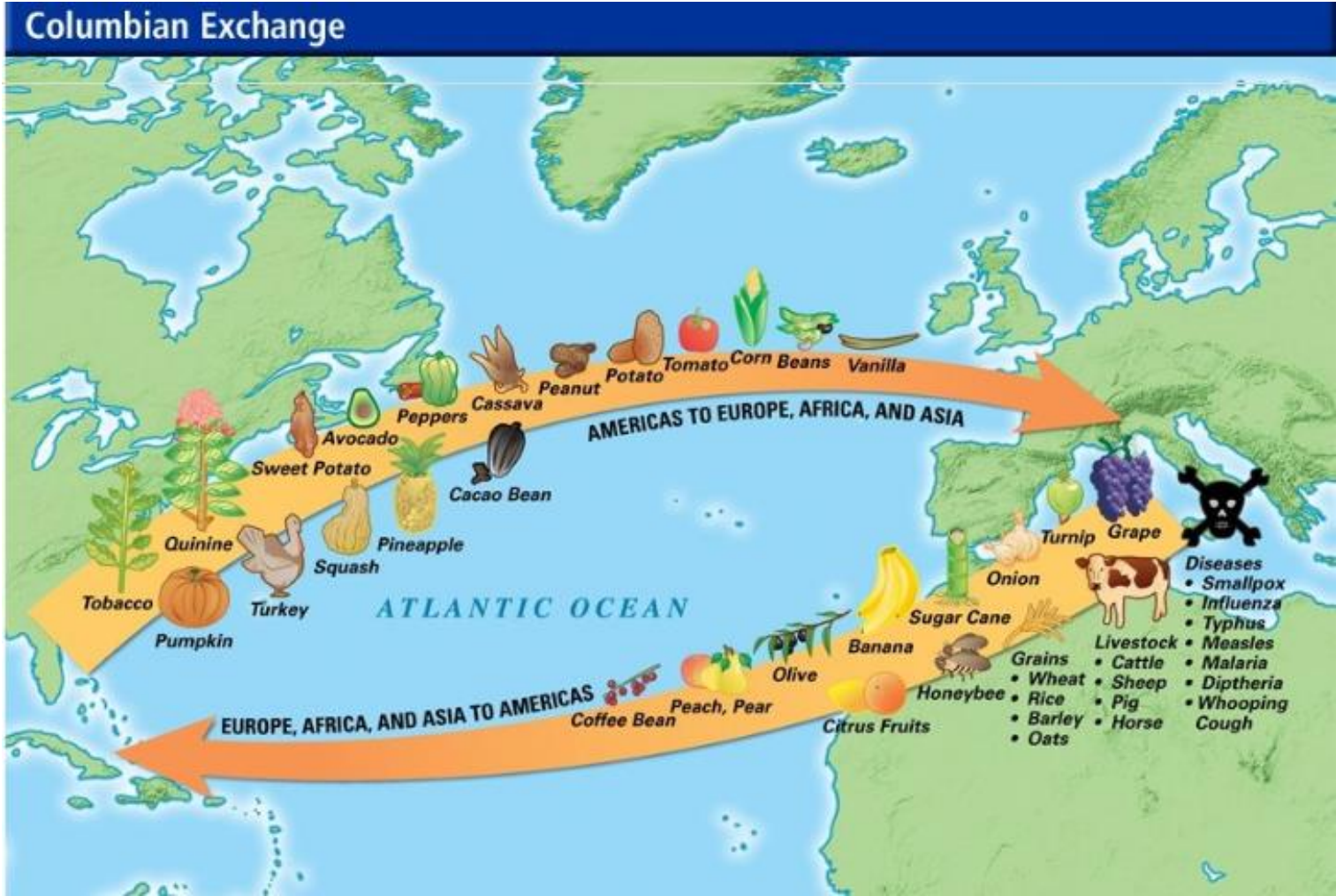
From Eurasia to the Americas

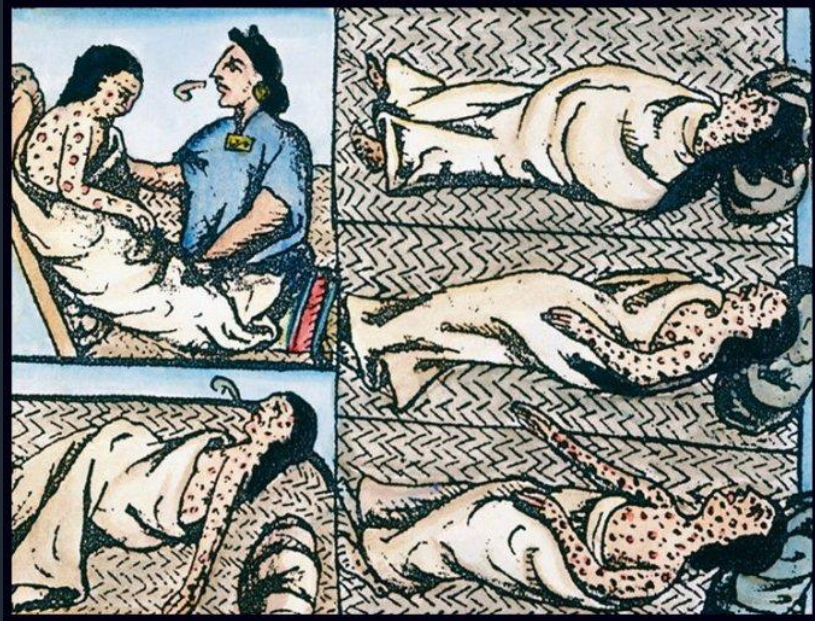
- almonds
- apples
- bananas
- cattle
- cherries
- chicken pox
- chickens
- Coconuts
- dandelions
- diphtheria
- Grapes
- horses
- influenza
- lemons
- measles
- meningitis
- onions
- Oranges
- peaches
- pears
- pigs
- plums
- rice
- sheep
- smallpox
- sugar
- typhoid
- wheat
- whooping cough

From Africa to the Americas

- African rice
- coffee
- collard greens
- okra
- palm oil
- yams

DISEASE





- smallpox
- influenza
- typhus
- measles
- malaria
- diphtheria
- whooping cough

"The Great Dying"

Demographic impact

- 60-80 million before Columbus
- densest areas: Central America and Andes (state-based civilizations)
- 90% mortality

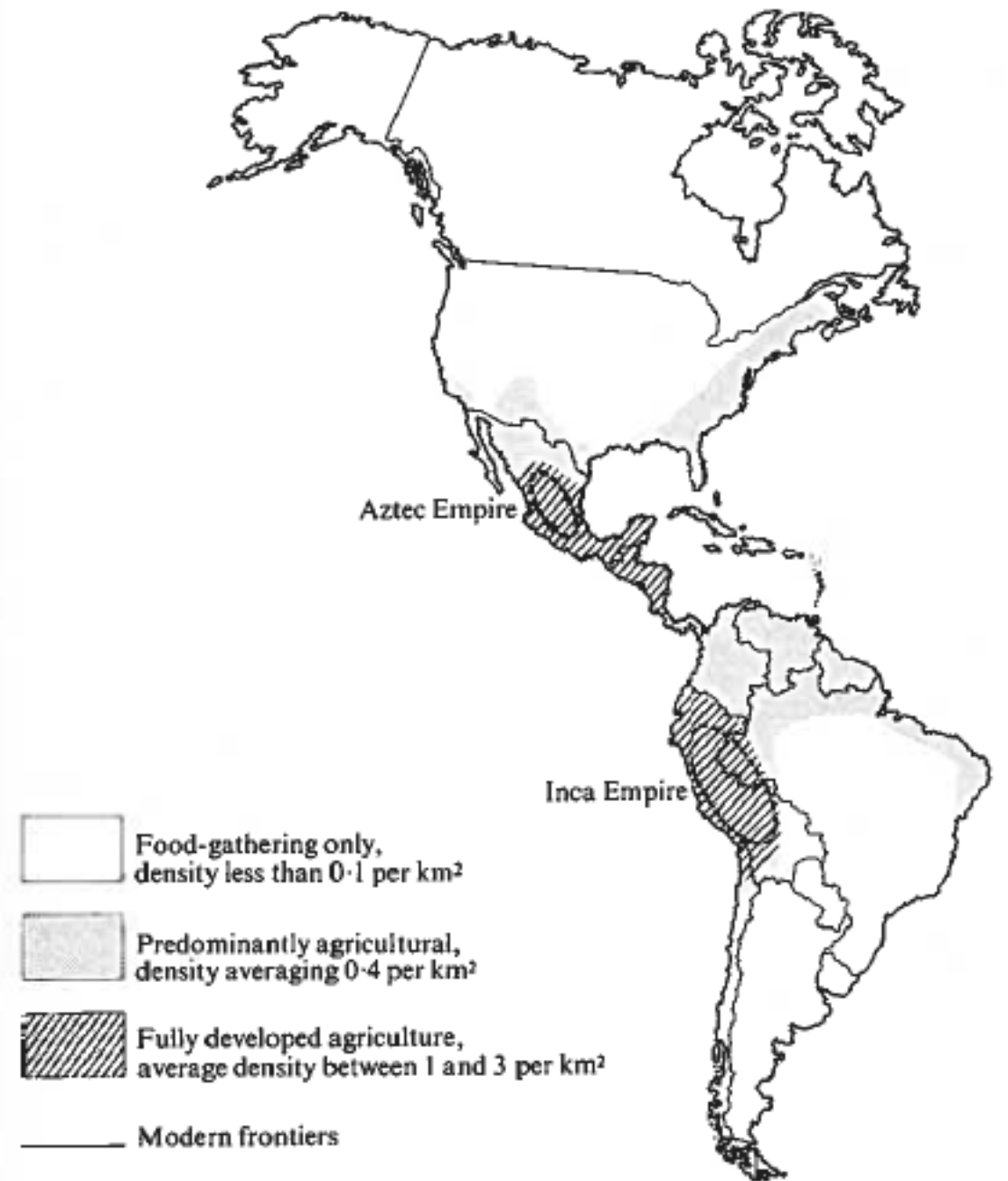
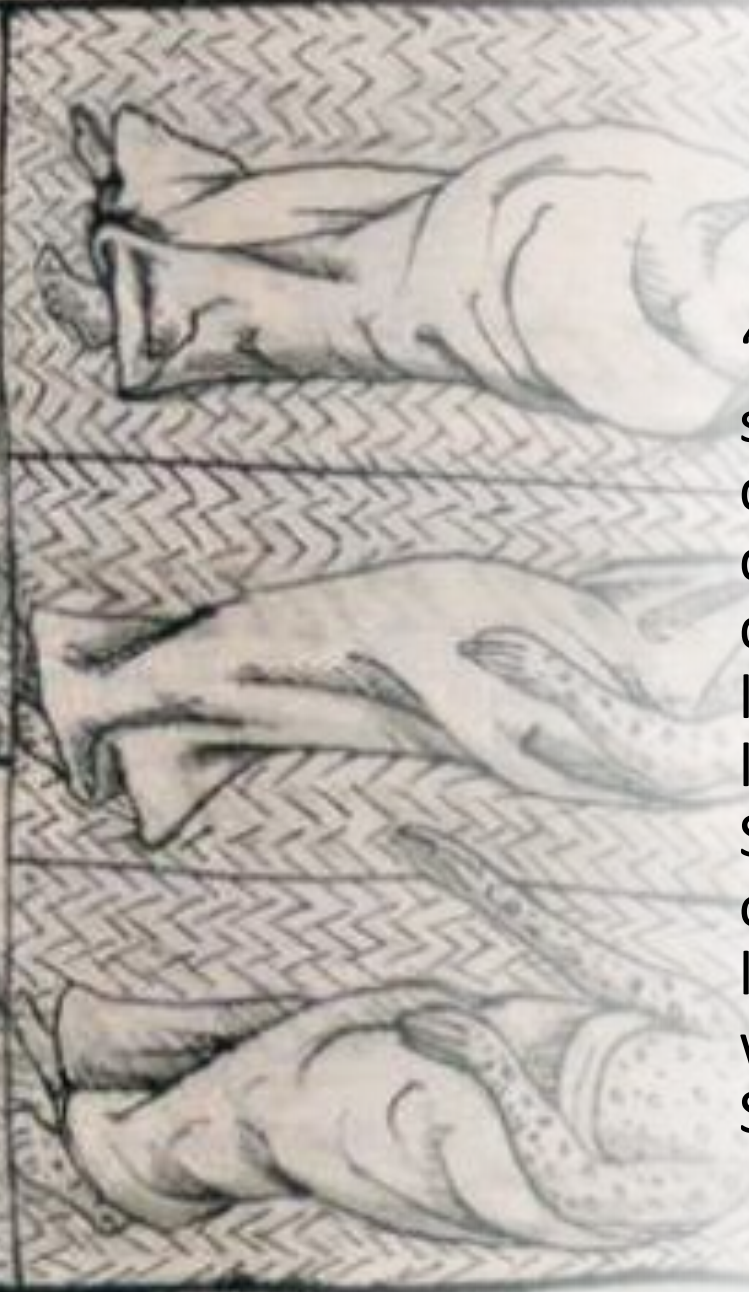


Fig. 4.3 *The Americas, agricultural development and population densities in AD 1500*



Florentine Codex

“[A]n epidemic broke out, a sickness of pustules... [The disease] brought great desolation; a great many died of it. They could no longer walk about... no longer able to move or stir... Starvation reigned, and no one took care of others any longer... And when things were in this state, the Spaniards came.”

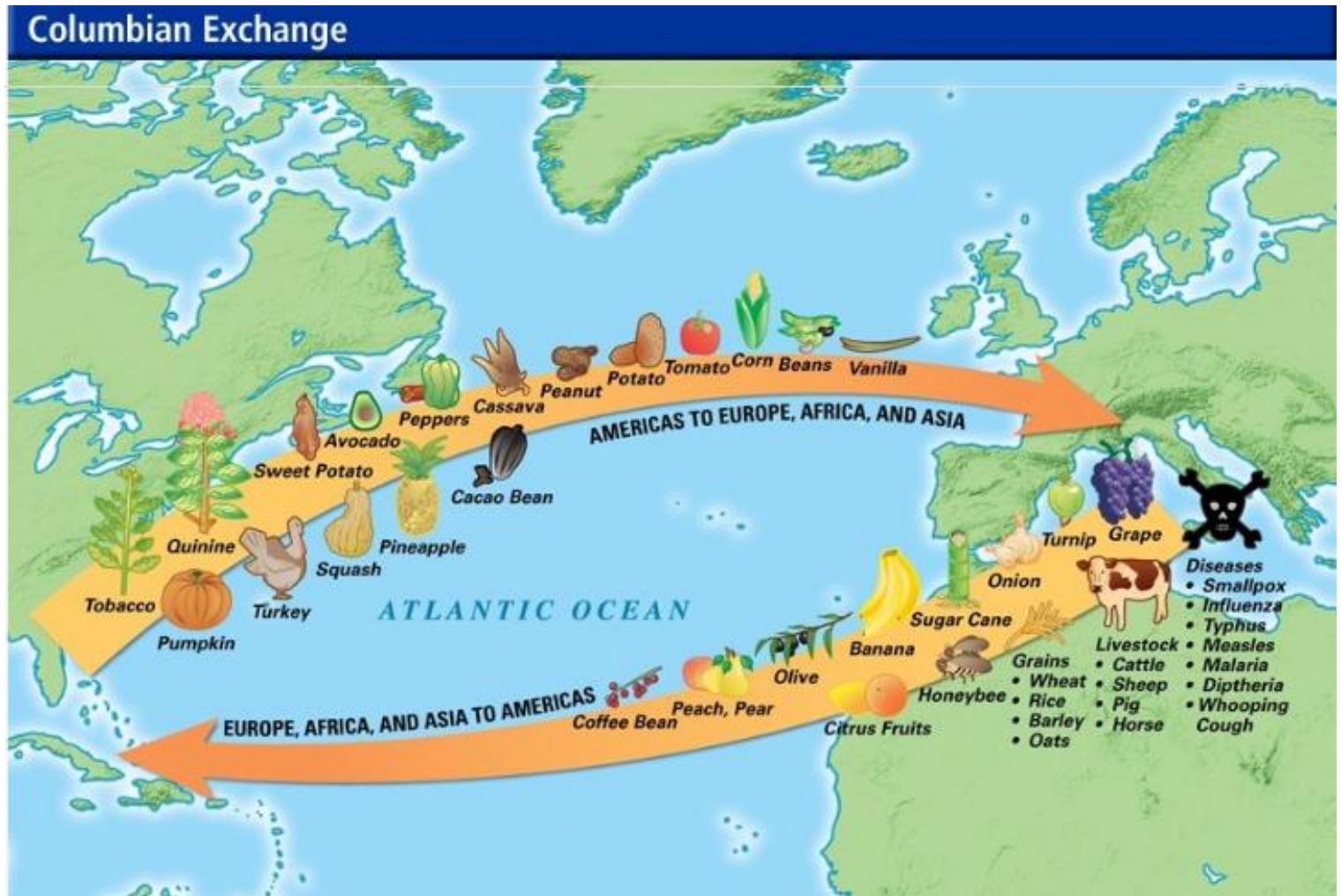
Report from
New
Amsterdam
(New York),
1656

"The Indians... affirm that before the arrival of the Christians, and before the smallpox broke out amongst them, they were ten times as numerous as they are now, and their population had been melted down by disease, whereof nine-tenths of them have died."

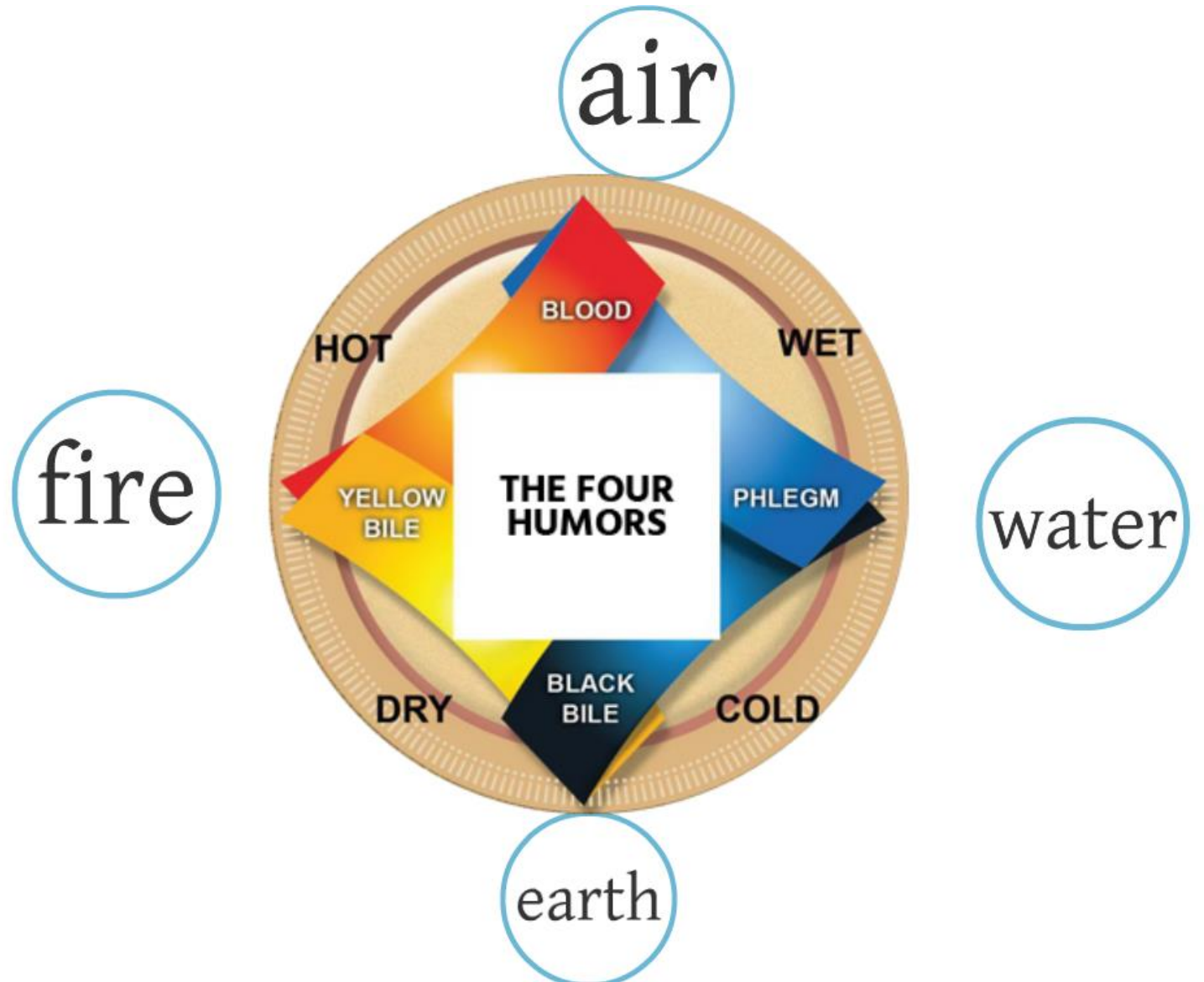
Disease Regions

- North America: chicken pox, measles, mumps, influenza
- Central and South America, Caribbean: yellow fever, dengue fever, malaria, hookworm

FOOD



Humours:
fluids
within the
body



Sweet Potato in China

- China: ecological peak in middle of the 17th century
- Little Ice Age - more droughts
- demographic impact of new crops
- comparison with India



China's Population

- 1650 - 140 million people



1850 - 425 million people

Animals

- Horses (e.g. of Navajo)
- Sheep in Mexico



“A world untouched by the Columbian Exchange would look (and taste) very different from the world we know.”

--Rebecca Earle in *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*