

In 1493, Ferdinand and Isabella sent a royal physician, Diego Alvarez Chanca, with Columbus's second voyage to the New World. Early in 1494 Chanca reported that he had seen several drugs that Columbus had found a year and a half earlier — nutmeg, gingers, aloes, cinnamon, myrobalans and mastic ... Some of Columbus's men witnessed the use of two other plants that would later have major impacts on the world's pharmacological economy. On 6 November 1492, a detachment on Hispaniola saw Indians who had "herbs to drink the smoke thereof," in the form of cigars. And on 17 February 1503, during the fourth voyage of exploration, several Spaniards saw Panamanians who "never stopped chewing a certain dry herb which they stuck in their mouths ... This seemed a very nasty habit." This was probably the first report of coca to reach Europe.

-J. Worth Estes, "The European Reception of the First Drugs from the New World"
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