

Spanish Armada timeline

Date	Spanish Armada	English Fleet
29th July 1588	An English ship first sights the Armada out at sea near the Isles of Scilly	A fast ship goes back to pass on the news. Fire beacons are lit along the coast to warn people that the Armada are coming
30th July 1588	The Armada is seen from land on Lizard Point, Cornwall	Admiral Howard leads his fleet into Plymouth Sound at night. The main fleet cross ahead of the Armada so that the wind is in their favour and send a decoy squadron to create confusion
31st July 1588	The Armada assemble into the fighting formation to protect themselves	By dawn the English fleet are in position
1st August 1588	Each ship in Armada is given its instructions to board the English ships and take them. A messenger is sent to tell the Duke of Parma in the Netherlands to inform and collect the army	Although in a good position, the English fleet are not quite ready to attack
2nd & 3rd August 1588	The Spanish try to get closer to the English fleet to board their ships and attack	The English ships are faster, more able to manoeuvre and have cannons aboard which can fire further than the Spanish. They fire their cannons at the Spanish ships as they sail quickly past
4th August 1588	The wind changes direction, the Armada is now heading towards the Isle of Wight. It turns back towards the Channel	The English divide into 4 squadrons to try to attack the Spanish ships
5th August 1588	The commander of the Armada, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, sends a message to the Duke of Parma telling him to be ready to meet the Armada at Dunkirk. He tells him to bring plenty of ammunition as they have almost used all of theirs. Little did Medina Sidonia know that the Dutch and the English were barricading the coast of the Low Countries, preventing Parma from sending an army	The English ships send messages to the government asking for gunpowder and ammunition as well as food. Nothing is sent
6th & 7th August 1588	The Armada anchors at the port of Calais. The Spanish push back the burning ships but the guns on the ships begin exploding frightening the Spanish who try to get out of the way	Reinforcement ships arrive to join the English and it is decided that the English must act quickly before Parma's army arrive. Old ships are packed full of things that will burn, set alight and sent in the direction of Calais
8th & 9th August 1588	The Spanish ships try to regroup whilst continuing to fight off the English but they are blown close to the port of Gravelines, by the wind and are at risk of being wrecked on the sandbanks. At the last minute the wind changes direction and the Armada are pushed back out to sea. They manage to regroup and agree that if the wind changes they will attack the English, but if the wind continues to blow northwards they will have to sail around the coast of Scotland and back to Spain	The English continue to attack with great vigor and sail towards the Armada to save ammunition Hawkins continues to ask for food and ammunition from the English government as he is unsure whether they have defeated the Spanish at this point
10th August 1588	The wind continues to blown against the Armada, they are unable to sail back down the English Channel and are forced to sail up the East coast and go around Scotland, past Ireland, to get back to Spain. Bad storms wreck many ships off the coast of Scotland and Ireland – only about half of the ships return to Spain	The English fleet follows the Spanish at a distance - they are not able to attack due to lack of ammunition. Once it becomes clear that the Spanish are retreating, they return to port.