



ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.

- **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS**
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AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #2 OF 2020 – February – For all New Titles: please see below for details.

INTRODUCTION

January, for us, was largely a travel month. We receive bargain travel offers from airlines, car rental firms, and tour operators every day. Every so often one appears that is enticing. As a result of one by Gate One Travel, we arranged to fly to Rome from LAX return, with a car rental and six nights in hotels. We stayed in the Naples area, as this is a part of Italy we haven't seen, and enjoyed visiting Sorrento, Amalfi, Naples and Pompeii, as well as checking out mapping information for our forthcoming map of Italy. We then spent a week touring the southwestern USA, re-familiarizing ourselves with a prime market area for our company, and enjoyed a brief sojourn into Mexico. Write-ups of travel-related information follows.

NEW ITMB TITLES

ITMB publishes 540 maps. That's a lot! About 100 run out of inventory each year and need to be updated. These updates include adding or deleting information that we have uncovered since the previous edition was printed, and upgrading the mapping data. This involves a lot of work and as a result, we have so many updating programs underway at any given point in time that it is difficult for us to find sufficient time to focus on areas that we have not yet mapped. We discontinued Egypt, for example, during the so-called Arab Spring, as a result of seriously-increased political instability. Most other publishing houses discontinued Egypt as a title as well. Now, five years later, we feel that it is time to re-introduce Egypt to our line with a brand new map, so expect it shortly. We are still expanding our range of European destination titles as well, releasing Italy and Sweden this month. We hope to have Amsterdam ready for release in the spring. We are also slowly developing new continental maps for Asia, Europe, and North America, and new parks maps for the USA. A new map of the far north of Scotland is imminent, and also one of one of the most isolated areas on earth, now called Svalbard, but better known in English as Spitsbergen. We will also be introducing a brand new map of the Panama Canal area, and hope to complete our next regional map of France during 2020. Not surprisingly, we remain convinced that the world of paper maps is healthy, and desirous of fresh artwork as travel markets evolve.

WHERE IS THE LARGEST US EMBASSY IN THE WORLD?

All countries have embassies. Some are larger than others, because the links joining the two countries are close. Canada's largest embassies would probably be in Washington, or in London, for fairly obvious reasons. The USA, due to its world-leader status, probably has more embassies around the world than any other country; again, this is to be expected. Some of these embassy compounds are fairly large, and all are well-defended against attack. One would expect that the largest US embassy, in terms of the number of people working there, would be in the capital city of one of America's strongest allies; perhaps Canada due to the amount of North American defense and economic mutual dependence. No? Well, then perhaps London, Paris, or Brussels, considering how dependent America is on Europe and on how close ties have been since the beginning of the American Republic. Not even close! OK, how about China, given the strong economic ties binding those two countries together, or Russia, considering its strategic importance to American defense? Nope; again, not even in the ballpark! The largest US embassy in the world, with 5,400 employees in place, is in insignificant Baghdad, Iraq. What on earth is so important to US interests to justify an embassy housing 5,400 American foreign affairs personnel? I don't know and cannot begin to imagine what all these highly-trained individuals do, but this news came to light as a result of the American bombing of a Sunni armed camp in the Syrian-Iraqi border in late December. This led to serious mob-related attacks on the Baghdad American embassy compound over New Year, and the size of the embassy became public knowledge through news reporting. There you have it! Why it is so, and do-you-care, are unanswerable questions.

POMPEI (or Pompeii, in Latin)

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During our recent visit to southern Italy, we enjoyed seeing quite a bit of a part of Italy we had not visited previously. We were based in Vico Equense, an attractive city south of Naples and close to Sorrento. Needless to say, Mount Vesuvius dominates the scenery, and a short drive to historic Pompeii was a highlight of our visit. Called Pompeii in Roman times, the city was severely damaged by a large earthquake in 62AD. The city was energetically re-building when a series of occurrences indicated that Vesuvius, a volcano, was becoming more active. In August of 79AD, the Aqua Augusta (the aqueduct providing water to Naples, Miseno, and Nola, among others) failed. Inspection revealed a severe ground heave that broke a section of the underground portion of the line in the vicinity of Vesuvius. Ground tremors and a rise in sulphuric vapour were other warning signs of a pending explosion, but the local inhabitants had no experience with volcanic activity and interpreted such signs as the gods being angry. An eruption never occurred to them. On the 24th of August, Vesuvius suddenly and violently erupted at 1:00pm, sending a plume of smoke thirty kilometers into the air and raining Pompeii and nearby towns with a thick layer of grey pumice. Its energy was equivalent to 100,000 Hiroshima-level atomic bombs going off simultaneously. That seems impossible to imagine! This was followed hours later by a rain of heavier black pumice, and on Day 2 by a wave of fine volcanic semi-liquid ash that killed thousands in less than a minute, burying them and the city in two metres of ash. As the centuries passed, Pompeii became forgotten except for the writings of Pliny the Elder, who witnessed the eruption and recorded his thoughts, immortalizing both the eruption and the death of the city. Vesuvius has erupted several times since 1700, but never with the force of the 79AD eruption. The area remains densely populated and excavations are steadily unearthing the original walled city. We spent a day exploring the ruins. This is a 'must-see' for everyone!

NAPLES AND ROME

We spent a day exploring the 'old town' of Naples, an incredibly unusual urban area of massive stone buildings and narrow streets unlike anything I've seen in other parts of Europe. We saw lots of tourists, so others shared our experiences, but we found the tall stone buildings confining. We found it easiest to travel to the city by train, which let us enter the old town easily. Rome was an entirely different experience. The Coliseum amphitheatre took a long time to explore, but was well-worth the visit, and was crowded with visitors. The nearby Palatine Hill and Roman forums were merely exhausting to explore, being so large, but we're glad we took the time to concentrate on them. Unfortunately, that left time only for the Trevi Fountain, which is still a marvel of carving, before we had to stop for a rest at a sidewalk cafe. Rome should not be attempted in just one day, but we had fun!

WUHAN FLU

As I write this, China is convulsed by a deadly flu outbreak originating in Wuhan. Authorities have taken unprecedented quarantine measures to slow the spread of the virus, but cases have already been reported in several countries, including the USA and Canada. This is detrimentally affecting tourism to China and all of eastern Asia. Needless to say, we are watching the news closely. All we can do is wait and see!

As of today's date most airlines have suspended flights to China. Chinese airlines are still flying, so countries are starting to ban them. This is devastating to world travel, but what can we do? Lan and myself were planning to visit Nepal and Bhutan in mid-February, but have postponed our trip. Nepal has initiated quarantine requirements that are unrealistic, but in any case, we were planning on returning via Vietnam, and that country has banned all flights from China. Can you imagine being stuck in Kunming indefinitely, without being able to fly home? I feel sorry for Asia, as this virus is going to deter travel to Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam as well as all of China and will seriously affect the travel industry in Europe, which is heavily dependent upon tour groups from Asia.

PURSES AND POCKETBOOKS

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The word “pocket” derives from Anglo-Saxon ‘pokete’, as does the word ‘purse’, being a bag to contain valuables one carries with one. A lady’s purse, or handbag, evolved originally out of necessity to carry personal items, rather than money, and in the Middle Ages, brought words such as ‘cut-purse’ into vogue, to define those stealing purses. This led to pockets being made in men’s clothing, to safeguard personal possessions, starting in the late 1700s, changing fashion styles for men and women. Shirt pockets for pens and personal grooming items became popular only about a hundred years ago. Eventually, men’s purses were compacted into small wallets able to be inserted into a slit in one’s pants, now also called a pocket. Women seem to prefer clothing without pockets and today tend to carry large handbags holding a bewildering assortment of necessities that always seem to make it difficult to find keys or credit cards. Fashionable purses are still in style, forcing women to transfer valuables from one bag to another on a regular basis. (Info culled from Tombstone, Arizona newspaper)

AMERICAN HUMOUR

We spent a week in southwestern USA during January, the longest time we have spent in that country since you-know-who took over. Much of Texas, Arizona and New Mexico consists of small, hollowed-out, dying towns, but there are still small-town community newspapers combining selling goods and purveying local news. I picked up a copy of the Desert Shopper in Arizona and came on some gems of humour. Such as:

A snail bought a sports car and had a big S painted on each side, to show off. As he was driving through a residential area of Los Angeles, one man said to another “Look at that S-car go!” (say it out loud for best effect!)

When NASA was preparing to send men to the moon, they ‘prepped’ on a Navajo reservation that they felt closely resembled the moon’s surface. An elderly local asked if they could take a message to the moon for him and wrote it out in Navajo. Eventually, someone in NASA got it translated “Watch out; these guys have come to steal your land!”

A couple were driving in Louisiana and stopped at Natchitoches for lunch. In the restaurant, they asked the waitress if she could pronounce where they were very slowly as they disagreed as to how to say the name. The waitress leaned over the counter and said Burr-r-gerrr-Kinggg!

A man watching a video on TV yelled at the screen “Don’t enter that building! Walk away, you stupid man!” His wife called from the kitchen, asking what he was watching. “Our wedding video!”

MEXICO AND TRUMP’S BORDER WALL

It is difficult these days to visit southwestern USA and not notice such things as border patrol vans used to pick up and transport individuals to incarceration camps. It is also difficult to be in any border state without realizing how pervasive the integration of white and Hispanic populations seems to be and how frequently Mexican-style eating establishments dominate the marketplace. We saw virtually no black or Asian people, but racial integration is a way of life here – until one approaches a border crossing to Mexico. We crossed into Mexico at El Paso, which is so ‘Mexican’ itself as to beggar the question for a border. It was so easy to enter Mexico, it was unbelievable. Essentially, one stops one’s vehicle at a designated stopping area, a camera takes a picture, and one continues driving. Bingo! You’re in Mexico! Ciudad Juarez, which is larger than El Paso, has suffered badly by the drug war and border harassment. The downtown area looks rather seedy, but we walked around and never felt unsafe. In fact, the locals were downright friendly. We saw no evidence of individuals pressed up against the fence leading into the USA, desperately trying to break through (a common assertion of Trump), but we did see long lines of cars patiently waiting to cross the border into El Paso.

We drove south through Juarez and were surprised to see dozens of high-tech factory buildings. We drove south along the highway to the first town along the highway, just to test out the road quality, then returned to the outskirts of Juarez and a ring road going to the east of the city and another highway following the border on the Mexican side. We drove as far as Porvenir, about 80 kms east of Juarez and crossed back into the States at a little, but new, border crossing that saw maybe five vehicles per hour. We actually had a pleasant chat with the border official, who found us interestingly different from his normal entry persons. It was here that we saw, for the first time, any evidence of Trump’s wall. East of the crossing station, for about twenty meters, there was the wall in all its 20-foot high glory. Mind you, there was no wall at the crossing itself, and anyone could easily walk around the wall in one minute.

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WORK IN PROGRESS ON CURRENT PROJECTS

Alaska is suddenly out of copies. We are rushing a new edition in print; no ETA.

Barbados is close to running out of copies.

Botswana/Zimbabwe is almost out of stock.

Bulgaria is now in print. As a result of our recent visit to the country, a new and improved version has been prepared, so Bulgaria will be available again sometime in the spring of 2020.

Ethiopia/Eritrea is out of inventory. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Italy North is out of stock and is being prepared as a fresh release in the spring.

New Zealand North Island is out of stock. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Nova Scotia is now out of stock. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Philadelphia is almost out of print. A fresh edition, combined with a new map of Pennsylvania, is being prepared.

Puerto Rico is now out of print. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

San Diego is close to running out of copies. A fresh edition is being prepared for release in the spring.

Shanghai is now out of print. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Slovakia is almost out of copies. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Sri Lanka is almost out of copies. A new edition has been completed and will be sent to press once the current edition is sold out completely.

Surinam is almost out of stock.

Yucatan is close to running out of copies.

Zambia is close to running out of copies.

Special note: a brand new map is currently at press, covering the Spitsbergen Archipelago and northern Norway. The islands are much more northerly than Iceland, but are an increasing travel adventure destination for jaded travellers who find driving to Nordkapp somewhat passé. Look for a press release in about two months!

NEW TITLES RELEASED DURING FEBRUARY, 2020

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Brasil Travel Reference Map 7th Ed. 2020 1:2,200,000/1:4,500,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771290975 UPC 817712909756 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – Brazil, or more properly, Brasil, is a difficult country to map as a country, in that most of the developed areas are in the relatively small extreme south of the country. The vast region of the Amazon Basin is lightly populated and is not easy to access. Our solution has been to portray the south portion on one side at a detailed scale, to enable such locations as Rio and Sao Paulo a better scale to help travellers, while mapping the north at a respectable but more limited scale on the map. That said, one still needs both sides of the map, as Brasilia, the capital, falls on the north side of the sheet. I should also note that roads north of Brasilia tend to be less well-paved than those in the south. The shape of the country also presents mapping difficulties, in that little room is available for inset maps. We have been able to include a good inset of central Rio, but visitors to Brasil would be well-advised to take along ITM maps of Rio and Sao Paulo for an enjoyable exploration. The map is printed on waterproof paper, both for durability and because of the humid climate, and includes a list of the top attractions. **AVAILABLE**

France South Rail and Bike Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2020 1:600,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771292849 UPC 817712928498 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – This is a brand new title for ITMB and an attempt to portray a changing travel landscape in a mapping format. Eco-tourism is a rapidly growing activity, with enormous potential. At the same time, governments are seeking to reduce carbon pollution by encouraging train travel, so ITMB is climbing aboard the movement by publishing a map encouraging train travel while still retaining the road network and noting all the long-distance bike routes in southern France by designated number. This is, by its scale, a generalized map of that portion of France south of Poitiers or Lyon to the Mediterranean, so is more of a regional map showing biking opportunities than a detailed trail map. Nevertheless, it is an excellent map on waterproof paper showing cycling routes and tertiary roads that are suitable for recreational exploration. Naturally, motorways and main highways are shown as well. **AVAILABLE**

Quebec City & Gaspé Peninsula Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2020 1:10,000/1:750,000 ISBN 9781771296427 UPC 817712964274 \$10.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – ITMB is pleased to be introducing yet another brand new title to our line. Quebec City is one of the oldest urban areas in North America, having been continuously occupied since 1608 (unfortunately, the first attempt at settlement, in 1606, failed through poor planning, and all the settlers perished). QC is also the only completely walled city in North America and the city streets within the walls have barely changed in 400 years. The city is also linguistically unique in being almost completely French Canadian in language (Montreal is much more Anglophiled). The city was the capital of French Canada until General Wolfe and the British army arrived in 1759. The British were able to climb the cliffs protecting the city from the St. Lawrence River during the night, and presented a mustered force that French General Montcalm had to confront at daybreak. Following a set-piece 18th century battle, in which both Wolfe and Montcalm were mortally wounded, the British won the day and ended French dominance in the Western Hemisphere (although it would not formally end until the sale of Louisiana in 1803). The city is rich in history, a frequent visitor of cruise ships, and easily accessible from the USA and all parts of Canada. This is the most unusual city in North America, so well worth a visit! The second side of the sheet covers the Eastern Townships south of Montreal all the way along the course of the massive St. Lawrence to the vast peninsula guarding access to the great waterway, called the Gaspé Peninsula. This is one of the great touristic driving realities of Canada, from Rivière-du-Loup to Matane to Percé Rock at the tip of this great peninsula. Inset maps of downtown Montreal and of the Montreal region are included, but the focal point for this map is the unique mass of this historically-significant peninsula of granite that had guarded Canada for centuries. **AVAILABLE**

NEW TITLES RELEASED IN JANUARY, 2020 (Repeated in case previously missed)

Oman and Yemen Travel Reference Map 4th Ed. 2019 1:1,300,000 ISBN 9781771295918 UPC 817712959188 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

Rocky Mountains Canada/US Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2020 1:3,000,000/1:600,000 ISBN 9781771296687 UPC 817712966872 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

Vancouver Island Travel Reference Map 8th Ed. 1:270,000 ISBN 9781771298711 UPC 817712987112 & 9.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

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