



ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.

- **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS**
- **ITM DISTRIBUTION**

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AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #01 OF 2022 – End of December, Beginning of January

INTRODUCTION

This is our first newsletter of 2022. It should have gone out around New Year's, but everything is behind schedule these days. Linh and Phuong took the kids on a road trip to California, then got stuck on the wrong side of the border due to changing Covid regulations, then got home but had to go into quarantine for a week due to changing Omicron requirements, then we had massive snow dumps that brought everything to a crawl, and frankly, nothing much has happened that is exciting. Lan and myself spent Christmas in the office, working on new maps. Due to Covid, we weren't allowed to visit our other grandchildren (i.e. Graeme and family) who live about 150 kms east of Vancouver. As a business, we are still experiencing long delays in receiving inventory from our printers. No new maps arrived from our printer during December. Omicron is causing all sorts of problems that we are just starting to become aware of, and welcome to 2022 and the new 'normal'.

OMICRON AND ITS AFFECTS ON TRAVEL

Covid-19 has morphed into a mutated version called Omicron. We all know this. What we have to remember is that this variant has only existed for a little more than one month, but it is panicking governments around the world, who are reacting by closing borders, restricting travel, and imposing economic shutdowns of large parts of the economy. Nothing works, of course, to slow the spread of Omicron. This comes as no surprise, as viruses tend to mutate. Although scientists had been warning governments of this for months, when it happened in South Africa, governments panicked and imposed travel restrictions, mostly on individuals travelling from southern Africa to other destinations, but the cat was already out of the bag and now millions of people all over the world are suffering from Omicron, as well as from travel restrictions. China has started locking down entire cities in a vain attempt to limit the virus. Britain has such a problem that no one knows what to do, except stay home. Netherlands has locked down, as has Austria, and the EU is falling apart as different member states pursue differing options, but Omicron continues to surge. The USA is slowly starting to realize just how pervasive this variant is, but seem powerless to do anything, as the vaccine deniers are so strong in that country. Every single state shows huge increases in infections, hospitals are filling up with very sick unvaccinated people, 1,600 Americans (mostly unvaccinated) are dying every single day of Covid as I write this, and the daily toll of unnecessary deaths is increasing day over day. Testing stations are overwhelmed, and hospitals are in danger of collapsing. Are you seeing the same in your community? Canada has imposed travel bans on entries, including bans on Canadians travelling internationally, but infection rates double every couple of days regardless. The ability to travel is becoming increasingly restricted. I'm very afraid that Omicron will prove to be so infectious that airports may have to be locked down. This is not the way we hoped to greet 2022!

TRAVEL TO EUROPE IN DECEMBER, 2021

Prior to Omicron, and keep in mind that it has only been an issue since early December, Lan and myself were asked to represent Canada at an international cartographic conference being held in Florence, Italy, Dec. 14-18. Actually, no one else from Canada was prepared to risk travelling in Europe, so we were the dunces that agreed to go, at our own expense, so that shows just how far travel has slipped! We figured that we had learned what advance work needed to be done to comply with European Covid protocols, so we started downloading files in October to ensure that we had every possibility covered. As it turned out, we had relatively few problems, but the stress of worrying about becoming infected and/or having difficulties returning to Canada took a lot of the pleasure out of the trip. Regardless, we managed to take a cruise of the Western Mediterranean, a train from Genoa to Florence, spend a week in that city, take another train to Rome, and fly home via an overnight in Frankfurt without becoming infected! I spent most of my time in Florence walking the streets, making corrections to our forthcoming map of Florence. While the basics haven't changed, a lot of hotel names and restaurants are new, and I was surprised to see that other map publishers leave off the two tram lines that are so vital to getting around the city.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT 2021

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We tend to get so involved with figuring out how to survive on a day-to-day basis, that we rarely have any time left over to step back and look at what has been accomplished during the past year. For example, a year ago, at the end of December, 2020, there was no such thing as a vaccine against Covid. Seems hard to believe, but the Number 1 story dominating 2021 is the marvelous job science has done in creating effective vaccines that blunt the force of the most deadly virus ever seen in modern times. Forget about population percentages vaccinated in each country, how many individuals, worldwide, have been successfully vaccinated? One billion, three billion, or even more; regardless of the actual number, in twelve short months, massive efforts by most governments throughout the world have mobilized enormous resources and protected billions of people against becoming seriously ill. That is an incredible accomplishment! Granted, there are still too many unvaccinated people wandering around, and efforts need to accentuate poorer countries in Africa and Latin America, but never before in human history have so many people been vaccinated in such a short time period. Omicron, emerging late in 2021, proves definitively that Covid is a disease that will never be defeated except by a massive worldwide effort.

Second, an effective vaccine to protect children over 5 from this deadly virus. While this new protective vaccine only came on the market during the last couple of months of 2021, tens of millions of children are now partly protected, and that figure will jump rapidly during 2022 as more and more countries start inoculating children. Of course, first jabbers will eventually reach the point in time where a second jab will reinforce the initial injection, so the biggest story of 2022 will probably be the immunization of a very high percentage of the human population. This is on-going good news that rarely gets reported. Children under age 5 also need protection, as Omicron has shown (700 deaths in the USA to date), so we need to develop a vaccine that can protect infants from birth onwards, the same as we do for measles, mumps, smallpox, polio, and a dozen other dreadful diseases. That may become a 2023 good news story!

Third, although the pandemic has negatively influenced political leanings throughout the world, away from democratically resolving issues through debate towards imposing dictatorial action by coercion, we tend to forget that politics is a lot more 'normal' at the end of 2021 than it has been for several years. Yes, crises exist, but there are no wars of significance going on as I write. Yes, Russia is threatening Ukraine and China is harassing Taiwan and the North Koreans are still sending missiles into the ocean, and Cold War hasn't really stopped, but Afghanistan is no longer being torn apart, even if a lot of us are unhappy about the way that the American withdrawal occurred. Iraq seems to be stabilizing. There is a new and less bellicose government in Israel. Italy seems to have finally found a government that works. Even Iran has reduced its disruptive behaviour a bit. Power was peacefully transferred from one leader to another, and one party to another, in Germany. Even in the USA, notorious for its fractious approach to governance, leadership has returned to something akin to normalcy, a welcome break from the chaotic Trumpist approach at demonizing everyone and everything that extreme conservatives didn't like. Covid is so disruptive that politics takes a back seat for once. Economies have faltered, coup attempts have been made (and have succeeded in some cases), millions of people have died before they should have, simply because they contracted a disease, and civil rights protests in the USA about police brutality have pretty much died away, to be replaced by protests about whether or not to allow abortion, or masking, or mandates vaccinations, or lockdowns. The world's economy isn't doing too badly, considering how Covid has decimated workforces. Unemployment is way down over 2020, oil prices way up, and affordable housing seems a dream never to be fulfilled. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer, and in the meantime, in between time – ain't we got fun? (and if you are too young to know that song, don't worry about it; it's from the Great Depression era – and all that jazz!).

WORK IN PROGRESS - all sellers/librarians please note

ITMB, as of mid-January, 2022, has ample inventory of almost all of the titles traditionally carried as part of our publishing line. We have way too many titles at press. We ask for your understanding if a particular title happens to be unavailable in the short term. Generally, we have ample inventory. The following titles are under development:

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Austria – This is a double-sided mapping project that has been years in the making. ITMB introduced a single-sided map of Austria a few years ago, which sold, but did not do justice to an important country like Austria. As a result, we have re-worked the artwork into a double-sided map of the country and made it into a Rail/Road map. No ETA

British Columbia: North Half – BC is as large as the USA west of the Rockies, or all of Western Europe, but the northern half of this vast province is lightly populated and poorly mapped. It is, however, a very attractive touristic destination, if for no other reason than the fact that access to the Yukon, Alaska, and the Northwest Territories are accessed through northern BC. ITMB produced a very successful detailed map of the southern half of BC a couple of years ago. Covid has provided the opportunity to prepare an equally detailed map of the northern half of this marvelous province. The line work will still take several months to complete.

Florence and Northeastern Italy – One of the most-visited cities in Europe is Florence. This second edition map is being developed as a double-sided city and regional map covering all of Tuscany and surrounding provinces. The city itself needs no introduction to map sellers, so all I'll say is that it covers the urban area in excellent detail at an incredible 1:5,000 scale, showing all attractions. This map was ground-truthed during December and dozens of improvements noted. The artwork is being modified as a result. The regional side is completed, covering from Venice to Milan to below Sienna. No ETA

French Atlantic Coast R&B – This is a very interesting portion of France, ranging from Paris south to the Mediterranean and from Brittany south to the Basque Country portion of Spain. The double-sided map is at a better scale than France South and is part of our effort to explore this interesting country at increasingly detailed scales. The artwork is still developing, so this title will probably not be ready until it is!

New Mexico – see Arizona, above

New Orleans/Mississippi River – We are well into developing artwork covering this important city travel destination map, including a separate map covering the Mississippi River Basin, but it will be several months before the artwork will approach completion.

North and South Dakota, plus Nebraska – ITMB is gradually extending its coverage of the USA via a series of state maps. The Dakotas form a natural entity for one side, and Nebraska for the reverse side. The line work is complete, and we are working on the final details. No ETA

Queensland (Australia) double-sided map – as our data base develops for Australia, we are finally able to provide detailed travel maps for most of the states of Australia. South Australia and Northern Territory have already been released, as has Western Australia. Now it is Queensland's turn. The line work is complete and the artwork is at the printer; no ETA at the moment.

Richmond, British Columbia – That's right folks, something we do receive a constant stream of requests for is a map of our own city which, as we discovered, has never been properly mapped. As a result, the proof checking is taking longer than usual due to inaccurate info on various web sites. We have driven over 1,000 kms. to date, checking place names, landmark buildings, parks, bike trails, and newly-opened streets. We are also updating our Vancouver map at the same time to serve as a bike map for the reverse side of Richmond, so our Metris van is visiting the gas pump more often than expected. ITMB has had a map of Vancouver City for a number of years, and recently published a map of North Vancouver and West Vancouver (two independent cities in the vicinity). Richmond will be the third segment of the Greater Vancouver region in our product line; ready, as always, when it is finished.

Russia's Heritage Cities – The current edition is out of inventory and consideration of a fresh edition is being developed in combination with a fresh map of European Russia (that portion west of the Urals). It won't be ready until the spring of 2022.

NEW RELEASES: DECEMBER

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Due to shipping delays, the titles we expected to arrive during December didn't arrive. This is unfortunate, but the world is still grappling with supply chain problems, and the titles will arrive, albeit at a date still uncertain!

NEW RELEASES in November, 2021

Cape Town & Garden Route of South Africa Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2022 on waterproof stone paper 1:10,000/1:1,350,000 ISBN 9781771291736 UPC 817712917362 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – Lan and I travelled South Africa's southern coastal route, known as the Garden Route a few years ago and found it fascinating. Shutdowns during the Covid upsurges in 2020 allowed Lan enough time to concentrate on producing an excellent map of Cape Town on tear-resistant Stone paper, covering the city in excellent detail, and a second full-sized map on the reverse side covering that portion of the country known as Cape Province; essentially, from Cape Town north to the Namibian border, east to the Transkei, and north to Potchefstroom. This encompasses the wine districts of Stellenbosch, the lovely towns of George and Knysna on the south coast, historic Port Elizabeth, the very interesting Transkei homeland, all of Lesotho, and the arid interior regions that resonate with history – Graaff Reinet, Bloemfontein, Kimberley, and Upington. One not-to-be-missed experience is Addo Elephant Park; another is Grahamstown; still another is Cape Agulhas, the southernmost point of land in Africa. An excellent and much-needed travel map! **AVAILABLE**

Cardiff, see Wales, below

Cariboo/Chilcotin (BC) Travel Reference Map 1:300,000 1st Ed. Limited print run ISBN 9781553419808 UPC 815534198044 \$9.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – Due to travel restrictions brought about by Covid, travel by land within North America is now the preferred method of travel, despite air travel being popular during holiday seasons. The region known as the Cariboo covers central British Columbia, and is BC's most popular recreational area. It covers Hwy 20 west to Anahim Lake and east to Mahood Lake, following Hwy 97 as it snakes northwards from Hat Creek to Quesnel, showing hundreds of wilderness campsites, historic Barkerville and the gold rush fields, and the week-long canoeing experience of the Bowron Lakes. Dozens of provincial parks are included, with hiking, biking, boating, and horse riding experiences to enjoy, hundreds of lakes to explore, tons of lakeside resorts to enjoy, and towns with interesting names like 108 Mile, Buffalo Creek, Horsefly, and Chilko to discover. If such names are unfamiliar to you, all the more reason to get the map and start exploring. This map goes to the heart of what created BC as a colony, and later as a province of Canada. It is double-sided, with all roads and trails clearly shown, and certainly covers a very interesting part of the world in excellent detail. International air travel might still be difficult to manage, but the Chicotin is just a few hours' drive north of Vancouver, and renting a camper van or 4x4 is easy. **AVAILABLE**

Georgia and Tbilisi Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2022 1:600,000/1:7,000 ISBN 9781771298018 UPC 817712980182 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – Georgia, the country and not the American state, is a very nice, but threatened country of great historical importance. Bordered on the west by the Black Sea, on the north by Russia, and on the east by Azerbaijan, and with an ill-defined border with Turkey on the west, Georgians must be nimble to retain their independence. Only with neighbouring Armenia does Georgia enjoy relatively good relations. Historically, Georgia is a Christian enclave that dates back to the earliest days of Christianity, and its many churches are major touristic attraction. This map portrays the country as accurately as is possible, showing the expanding network of motorways, major churches, castles, touristic sites, and regrettably, areas of contention with both Russia and Azerbaijan. The reverse side shows a full-sized city map of Tbilisi, the capital. This is the first time that the city has been portrayed in such detail. Attractions include the Narikala Fortress, the cathedral, the old town centre, and the Dry Bridge Market (now a flea market, but in Soviet times a black market). The city lies beside the Kura River, in a valley enclosed by Mtatsminda Mountain, which has two cable cars to its summit, which is now a recreational theme park. The city's two metro lines are also a good way to travel around the city. **AVAILABLE**

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Gulf Cruising and the UAE Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2022 1:1,500,000 1:900,000 ISBN 9781771296267 UPC 817712962676 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – The Gulf, in this case, is the Persian Gulf, or if you prefer, the Arabian Gulf or, if you wish to, the Iranian Gulf. Regardless of which name one prefers, it is the body of water between Iran and the Arabic Emirates of Bahrain, Qatar, Dubai, and Oman/Muscat. It is also a popular cruising locale, with ships operating from Dubai to various ports of call. It also covers a considerable amount of geography, so side 1 concentrates on the water area from Kuwait/Iraq/Iran south to Bahrain and Qatar, along the coastline of the UAE to Oman and the Straits of Hormus, and along the coast of Oman to Muscat. It also includes inset maps of Manama (Bahrain), and Doha (Qatar), for the convenience of users. The second side of the map shows all of the United Arab Emirates and most of Oman, with insets of central Dubai and Muscat. Each side includes a listing of the top attractions of the side being shown. This is the third of ITMB's growing range of cruising maps. We believe that the future of travel includes cruises as a popular means of exploring exotic travel destinations while retaining a comfortable environment. My wife and I cruised the Gulf a couple of years ago and found cruising to be an excellent way to explore several different countries that would be difficult to reach in any other manner. One day, I hope that cruises in this part of the world will extend to ports of call in Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran. **AVAILABLE**

Wales and Cardiff Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2022 1:300,000/1:8,000 ISBN 9781771291743 UPC 817712917430 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP - ITMB finds the UK to be a never-ending source of maps needing to be prepared, such as this one of Cardiff and Wales. Cardiff is the capital of Wales, and is also an international access point to the UK; a map seems desirable. The city is based at the mouth of the River Taff, with most touristic points being concentrated in the harbour area, the city centre, and a concentration of eateries along Albany Road. Cardiff is shaped by two parallel motorways; the A4232 close to the waterfront, and the A48 near the northern extremities. Both are included in our map, which also shows historic sites, hotels, and tourist amenities. The reverse side shows all of Wales as an entity, showing roads, rail lines, ferry crossing points, and access routes to England. It also shows historic sites, tourist attractions, parks, airports, ferry terminals, and all the towns and villages. By the nature of the shape of Wales, adjacent portions of England also are included – Liverpool, Shrewsbury, Ludlow, and Hereford. **AVAILABLE**

NEW RELEASES in September, 2021

Eastern Europe Rail & Road Travel Reference Map 1st Ed., 2021 1:2,600,000 ISBN 9781771292641 UPC 817712926418 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

Nevada & Northern California Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2021 ISBN 1:875,000 ISBN 9781771295734 UPC 817712957344 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

New South Wales, Victoria, & Tasmania Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2021 1:1,900,000 ISBN 9781771295741 UPC 817712957412 \$13.95 can/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

Sri Lanka & Southern India Travel Reference Map 4th Ed. 2021, on waterproof paper 1:450,000/1:1,600,000 ISBN 9781771297134 UPC 817712971340 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

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