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- **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS**
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AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #10 OF 2023 – Early November

INTRODUCTION

This year's Frankfurt Book Fair has come and gone. It was gratifying to see so many colleagues again, many of whom haven't attended since 2019 and 'the end of the world as we knew it'. Lan and I also undertook a grueling two-week research excursion to Uzbekistan, a part of the world becoming popular. The entire 'stan' region is fabulously interesting, even though Afghanistan is beyond the pale at the moment. Travel itself seems to be picking up speed and should top 2019 levels sometime next year; all good news for those in the map industry! Now, a new war has erupted in the Eastern Mediterranean as the world order established in 1945 slowly disintegrates and as a result, new challenges for the travel industry emerge.

NEW TITLES

Obviously, with Lan being in Europe and Uzbekistan over the past three weeks, production has slowed down a bit. However, we have one brand new title being released now, and several updates. Recently, we released a new title covering the east coast of Canada. This month, we release BC Coast and Alaska's Inside Passage, a companion map to our well-established USA Pacific Coast title, covering from Victoria north to Glacier Bay in Alaska. As a matter of trivia interest, the Alaska Panhandle no longer is joined to the rest of Alaska. When the border was set in the early 1900s, it crossed over the glacier at the northernmost tip of Glacier Bay. No one anticipated that the glacier would melt, leaving the border split between Canada and the USA for about a kilometre.

UZBEKISTAN: A TRAVEL ADVENTURE

In the latter part of October Lan and I undertook a Discovery Tour of Uzbekistan with Gate 1 Travel. This country has an ancient history dating back to the 7th Century BC, but it only emerged as an independent country thanks to the breakup of the Soviet Empire in 1991. In fact, until the October Uprising in 1917 that overthrew the Czar, it didn't exist at all except as part of an amorphous mass called Central Asia. After Russia's disastrous defeat in the Crimean War, the Czar turned his attention eastward and decided it was time to rid the planet of the slave trade in captured Europeans that flourished in what is now Uzbekistan. Russian forces invaded in force and soon captured Bukhara, Samarkand, and Tashkent in 1867, the same year that the Czar sold Alaska to the Americans and Canada became the first colonial entity to gain independence by negotiation. The slave trade was eradicated and the area was absorbed into Imperial Russia. This continued until 1922, when Bolshevik forces arrived, besieged Bukhara, imposed their will on the entire region (quite brutally) and soon created imaginary 'independent' republics to manage such a vast area. Thus, it was Lenin/Stalin who created the name Uzbekistan, using the name of one of the tribes, the Uzbeks. They did the same for the other 'stans', creating administrative 'republics' that were easy to control.

Soviet control happened to be fairly heavy-handed authoritarianism working only to the advantage of the Rus (those originating in the Golden Ring northeast of Moscow), but the poorly educated tribalists survived the best they could do and opted for independence when the Soviet empire imploded so dramatically in late 1990. Thus, we all came to be aware of several brand new countries – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan is a polyglot collection of 92 ethnic tribes and a dozen languages, so visiting it is akin to also seeing Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan without actually crossing into those countries.

Uzbekistan has 36 million inhabitants and is about the area of the British Isles. In its first thirty years of existence, it has done a marvellous job of creating governmental institutions from scratch while moving towards a 'westernized' approach to society. It is a civil state, not an Islamic state, although it is overwhelmingly Muslim, with a relaxed approach to religion. Tourists are welcome and the locals are friendly. There are still some problems to sort out regarding visas, as those under 55 years need them, but not those 56 or older. Obtaining a visa seems to be exceptionally bureaucratic. The capital is Tashkent (pop 3.5M), the main city for tourism is Bukhara (pop 475T), and the westernmost city of interest is Thika, an ancient capital. Most of the north of the country is desert-like steppe lands. We were on a tour, so stayed in nicer lodgings than we would normally use, and travelled by a tour bus most of the time, with one air flight to the west of the country and one train between Samarkand and Tashkent. Independent travel is possible, but the tourism industry is not geared up for masses of individuals. The car rental industry, for example, is in its infancy.

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Why should one visit Uzbekistan? It is an ancient entity, reaching its zenith as a tribal conglomerate under Tamerlane (Timur the Lame) in the 14th century. He created marvellous mosques and schools (madrassas), most of which are still standing. Of course, being on the Great Silk Road helped. Tashkent was a junction of several routes coming from farther east, and was a popular rest area for caravans. Bukhara was at the junction of routes coming from India and heading west and several of the caravansaries (akin to hotels) still exist. Thika retains a majestic stance after centuries of being a capital and a major trade route rest area. All three are on the great trading route that brought spices, silk, and other trading goods to Europe before sailing ships were large enough and navigation tools good enough for Europeans to by-pass the long and dangerous trans-Asia trek. Marco Polo may be the best-known travel adventurer in the world, but his exploits in the 12th century followed a well-trod route that had existed for centuries.

So, what is noteworthy about Uzbekistan today, apart from its rich history? A 1966 earthquake destroyed much of Tashkent, so it is now a relatively modern city, with enormous traffic congestion. The Uzbek currency has no coins and it takes 12,000 Sou to make 1 US\$. Inflation is high. Chevrolet cars dominate the car market, as they are assembled locally and import taxes are inordinately prohibitive. Electric cars are almost unheard of. Unemployment is at 4.5%, but that figure is suspect. Natural population increase is 3.8% annually, which means that the country increases by 980,000 net each year. This is unsustainable but no one seems able to change long-held customs. Alcohol is freely available, and the country boasts two breweries. Both Coca Cola and Pepsi thrive here. Bottled water is readily available. The soviet practice of concentrating cotton production here was ecologically disastrous, draining Lake Aral and creating a massive desert and constant water shortages. The government is trying to wean farmers away from cotton by encouraging the planting of fruit trees. Relations with neighbouring Kazakhstan seem to be reasonably placid, but tensions exist with Turkmenistan and Afghanistan, so the military budget constitutes 17% of the annual governmental expenditure. The country is still far too cozy with Putin's Russia and this makes the country very susceptible to pressure. The country's future looks bright – as long as it maintains openness and tolerance. However, the world is entering a new phase of unbridled power grabs and destabilized societies, so one can only hope for the best and wish a lovely country well.

A-Z MAPS

After a hiatus of a few years, A-Z is returning to the marketplace with their inimitable maps of London. ITMB first began marketing the A-Z line in 1983 and was that firm's North American distributor until they sold the business to Harper Collins in 2017. HC is a book publishing company and doesn't understand that publishing maps is vastly different than books (in my opinion). They already had a few maps in print under their Collins label and I think that they weren't quite sure how to deal with their new acquisition. Then along came Covid and nobody had any time to spare deciding what to do with anything! Now it is 2023 and A-Z is issuing maps again; albeit one title at the moment: London A-Z Visitor's Map (ISBN 9780008581794 \$7.95cdn/us). By agreement with Harper Collins, ITMB has been appointed their North American map distributor again, so we're very pleased. More titles are about to be released, most notably the London A-Z atlas, which is the bible for finding one's way around London. I have used it ever since my first visit to London in the early-1960s. The atlas is apparently at press and expected by Christmas. The Visitor's Map is in stock and available to retailers and end users within Canada and the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. It covers from Earl's Court to London Bridge and from Victoria to Regent's Park; in other words, all of central London. As always, it shows all the streets clearly (with an index on the back side), notes major buildings in colour, shows all the 'tube' lines (but not their underground routes), all the railway stations and passenger lines, bus routes (including bus numbers), embassies, hotels, cinemas, churches, hospitals, theatres, and major attractions. The back cover of the folded map is an updated transit map of the tube lines within the area of the map. We are very pleased to be re-adding the A-Z line to our distribution system and look forward to seeing more titles emerge in the months to come.

WORK IN PROGRESS - all sellers/librarians please note

ITMB, as of late October, 2023, has ample inventory of almost all of the titles traditionally carried as part of our publishing line. We ask for your understanding if a particular title happens to be unavailable in the short term.

Africa East and Central is getting low on inventory. A new edition will be released in the fall.

California is unexpectedly out of print due to demand. An updated version is at press. No ETA.

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Cuzco and Region is approaching the end of its print run. A new edition is being prepared.

Dominica/St. Lucia is getting low on inventory. New editions are being prepared; no ETA.

Germany is now out of stock. An updated edition has been sent to press. ; no ETA.

Krakow is now out of print. A new double-sided map is being prepared. No ETA.

Northwest Territories is now out of print. We are preparing a new map that will combine it with Nunavut. **Nunavut** is also getting low on inventory, but is not in any danger of running out of copies at the moment.

Orlando/Central Florida is in danger of running out of copies, due to a sudden surge in demand that was unexpected. A new edition is being prepared, but has not yet reached the stage of being sent to press.

Osaka is now out of print. A fresh edition has been prepared and is at press. We expect the map in December.

Philippines is now out of copies. No problem! A new edition has already been printed and should arrive in late November. Please continue to order using the 'old' ISBN.

Sudan is getting low on copies. A new double-sided map with Sudan on one side and South Sudan on the other side are being prepared; no ETA.

Toronto and Region suddenly and unexpectedly surged in demand during August and as a result is now out of print. A new edition has been sent to press; due in late November or early December.

USA East Part Map is now out of copies. A new version is being prepared. No ETA.

NEW RELEASES DURING OCTOBER, 2023

BC Coast & Alaska Inside Passage Travel Reference Map (NEW TITLE!) 1st Ed. 2023 1:900,000 ISBN 9781771291095 UPC 817712910950 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP9.95 – This is a new map for us, combining both the Canadian and the American portions of the Pacific coastline north from the Seattle area to the Alaska Panhandle, ending at the Glacier Bay National Park, which extends considerably north of the Bay itself. Side one concentrates on the Canadian portion, from Victoria north to the Queen Charlotte/Haida Gwaii islands, showing ferry routes and the routes most favoured by cruise ships. As a coastal map, it doesn't go very far inland, but shows the Coastal mountain range to good advantage. Side two provides a very detailed map of that portion of Alaska known as the Panhandle – a series of islands north and west of Canada that is very popular with cruisers. All parks and cruise line routes are shown. Interestingly, at the top end of Glacier Bay, the Canadian border splits the Panhandle from the rest of Alaska; not intentionally, but when the border was agreed upon in the early 1900s, no one realized that the glacier on that site might one day melt. Well, melt it has, leaving a kilometer-long stretch of beach that is part of Canada! Regardless, this map completes ITMB's mapping of the Pacific coastline of North America from the Bering Sea to Panama, a cartographic task that began decades ago. **AVAILABLE**

BC Southern & Alberta Southern Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2023 1:900,000 ISBN 9781771297395 UPC 817712972958 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95 – Canada is a huge geographic entity, even once split into provincial entities. Most of the touristic interest in both British Columbia and in Alberta is concentrated in the southern half of both provinces, so we try to make life easier for travellers visiting this part of the world to have a detailed map at a good scale showing the roads and attractions of one of the continent's most-visited touristic destination. Side 1 concentrates on BC from the American border north to Quesnel and showing all three passes through the Rocky Mountains. Side 2 does the same for Alberta as far north as Edmonton and includes both Banff and Jasper national parks. Detailed inset maps of Calgary and Edmonton are included. This map is ideal for the visitor needing a map of the Rockies that includes all the passes and parks in the region, while also showing the cities and road/rail infrastructure. Naturally, wilderness campsites are included. ITMB also publishes separate maps of each province. **AVAILABLE**

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Greece Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2023 1:625,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771293235 UPC 817712932358 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 10.90 – Greece is one of the most important touristic destinations in the world. We have travelled the country extensively and have undertaken a serious upgrading of information for this edition. As a country, Greece divides naturally into three portions – the area around Athens and the Peloponnese, the far north region centred on Thessalonica, and the marvellous islands scattered around the southern portion of Greece. This is an overall map, showing the latest road information and noting historic and cultural sites of interest to visitors, including world heritage sites. An inset map of Athens is included, but ITMB's map of the city would be useful for those exploring Athens in detail. We also published an expanded map of the Peloponnese, and another of Crete and Mykonos. **AVAILABLE**

NEW RELEASES DURING September, 2023

Athens and Peloponnese Travel Reference Map 1:8,000/1:625,000 2nd Ed. 2023 (1st for the Peloponnese side) ISBN 9781771290302 UPC 817712903020 on waterproof paper \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP9.95 – Athens is one of the most ancient and historic cities in the world. The Acropolis is the mountain upon which rests the Temple Athena, often called the Parthenon as it dominates the terrain. Close by is the Agora, the ancient city market centre, and at the foot of the Acropolis are two open-air theatres that date back to ancient times. Athens is also a modern city with congested roads, vibrant stores, and an excellent underground transit system. Included with Side 1 is a map of Piraeus, the nearby port city, with its many terminals for ferries leading to the various Greek islands. It is also one of the most active cruise ship terminals in the world, operating from Terminals A through C. A regional transit map is also included. Side 2 concentrates on the peninsula (technically an island) west of Athens called the Peloponnese that is the home to Olympus, Sparta, and other former city states of legendary fame. **AVAILABLE**

Canada East Coast Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2024 1:535,000/1:150,000 ISBN 9781771290326 UPC 8117712903264 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP10.90 – Canada is a vast country in area; inconceivably enormous in European terms. It is best mapped as a series of regional maps and this is the first of two maps that we hope will portray the Atlantic coastline of all of North America. Side 1 concentrates on Newfoundland and Labrador, with a tiny bit of Nunavut at the top end of the Ungava Peninsula. An inset map of St. John's, capital of Nfld/Lab is included, as is the French Overseas Territory of St. Pierre et Miquelon. The new paved highway across Labrador is the highlight of this side of the map! The second side of the map focusses on Nova Scotia/Cape Breton and parts of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, with a detailed inset of central Halifax. The former French fortress of Louisbourg is a must-see for anyone visiting Cape Breton, as are the many Loyalist towns created along the coast of Nova Scotia to house refugees fleeing turmoil in the American colonies during the Revolutionary War. A separate map concentrating on the Atlantic coastline of the USA is being prepared. **AVAILABLE**

Ontario Travel Reference Map 4th Ed. 2023 ISBN 9781771295949 UPC 817712959492 \$11.95cdn/us E/GBP9.95 – Ontario is another entity created by fleeing Loyalists from the American Revolution, initially called Upper Canada to separate it from French-dominated Lower Canada, or what is now Quebec. It has become the industrialized hinterland of Canada and home to eight million people, most of whom seem to congregate in the vicinity of Toronto. In area, Ontario far exceeds the size of Europe or any American state. Side 1 is dedicated to northern Ontario, a vast region of lakes and rivers, but relatively few people. The Lake of the Woods region was mapped by fur trappers and now forms a watery border between Canada and the USA. Further east, near Thunder Bay, is Old Fort William, the greatest fur fort ever made, and east of that is the Precambrian Shield, the oldest mountains on earth and source of much of the world's mineral wealth. Further east again is Cochrane, site of a polar bear sanctuary and the southern terminus of the only route to Hudson's Bay, by rail. **AVAILABLE**

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Route 66 Travel Reference Map 3rd Ed. 2023 (first as a map) ISBN 9781771298544 UPC 817712985446 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP9.95 – Route 66, the Mother Road of America, is a travel experience unlike any other. Whether starting east from Santa Monica in California or from Chicago and driving west and south, this is a unique travel experience that anyone can do. Historically, Route 66 was the first road to be paved all the way to the west coast, and was used by millions of troops heading for the Pacific War against the Japanese during WW2. It was also used by millions of Americans heading west in the 1930s to the ‘promised land’ of California and created such wonders as motels, fast food eateries, rest areas, and neon signs, many of which still exist. We start our map with an inset of Chicago, showing it following Hwy36 (Route 66 no longer exists except as a historic route), then south to St. Louis, then west to Oklahoma City before one has to move to side 2 for the route west past Albuquerque, then through Flagstaff and the Mojave Desert to Los Angeles and the terminus of Route 66 on the beach at Santa Monica. This map can, of course, be equally valuable driving west to east, as I have done, or east to west. Either way, it is an unforgettable travel experience! **AVAILABLE**

NEW RELEASES DURING AUGUST, 2023

Kenya Travel Reference Map 5th Ed. 2023 1:950,000 ISBN 9781771294164 UPC 817712941640 on waterproof paper \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 10.90 – AVAILABLE

Mexico Pacific Coast Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2023 ISBN 9781771294805 UPC 817712948052 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP 13.95 – AVAILABLE

Norway Travel Reference Map 4th Ed. 2023 1:900,000 ISBN 9781771295826 UPC 817712958266 on waterproof paper \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 10.50 – AVAILABLE

Oslo/Bergen & Norway South Travel Reference Map 3rd Ed. 2023 1:8,000/1:800,000 ISBN 9781771295932 UPC 817712959324 on waterproof paper \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP10.90 – AVAILABLE

Polynesian Islands Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2023 scale varies ISBN 9781771296311 UPC 817712963116 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP10.90 – AVAILABLE

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