



ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.

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

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AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #2 OF 2024 – Early February

INTRODUCTION

Winter is upon us in the northern hemisphere, making travel to warm destinations very attractive. For those in North America, this tends to mean Florida, California, Hawaii, or various island nations in the Caribbean. Travel to Central America and parts of South America is also picking up. For those of you in Europe, obviously, the Mediterranean is calling, with Spain, Portugal, the Azores, and Canaries calling. Also consider Tunisia, a much overlooked but very attractive destination! Also Albania, another Mediterranean warm country, at least along its coastline. For those of you in the southern hemisphere, enjoy your warm weather. A flock of snowbirds is heading your way! ITMB has maps of virtually all possible destinations.

NEW TITLES

First, an apology. Our newly arrived map of California was noted in the last newsletter, but the write-up was accidentally deleted prior to the letter being sent out. Sorry about that, but mistakes happen. The description is included in the new releases section below. Second, we have 10 titles at press at the moment, but none have arrived during January. Therefore, there are only 2 titles being released during January. Too bad, too sad. During 2024, we hope to retire several older versions of existing maps and bring out lots of newly updated editions. Fortunately, sales during January were robust, meaning hopefully that more travel destinations are becoming popular again. Press releases continue to be sent out weekly.

TRAVEL TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC: BORA BORA

Here is a tidbit of history most of you will not be aware of having happened, but it did. We all know that Japan attacked Pearl Harbour on December 7th, 1941, causing severe damage to the American military presence, especially its navy. The goal of Japan was to knock the Americans out of the Pacific so they would have a free hand expanding their empire. We all know that this did not happen. First, all the American aircraft carriers were at sea at the time and were not damaged. This provided a 'building block' to rebuild America's Pacific naval fleet. Second, the attack infuriated the USA as no other act could have done and united the American people to declare war. As we all know, Americans are very difficult to unify, but once they do, watch out! Japan seriously misread the situation and created a maelstrom that destroyed their huge empire a short three and a half years later and fundamentally changed their society forever. What you might not know is what the Americans did immediately after getting over the initial shock of being attacked so violently. They sent the Atlantic fleet, or at least an armada of ships, through the Panama Canal from Charleston, North Carolina, towards the tiny island of Bora Bora, in French-controlled Polynesia. Unfortunately, they failed to notify the islanders, who woke up on February 17, 1942 to find a dozen menacing-looking military ships and 4,450 heavily-armed soldiers descending upon them. Once they realized that these were not Japanese troops coming to occupy them, they welcomed the Americans, who quickly transformed the island into a fortress. Consider that, at that time, this was a lightly populated backwater island that scarcely had any resources, like water for drinking, an airstrip, roads, fuel depots, or housing. Give the Americans full credit. Faced with the impossible, Admiral Turner soon had bulldozers churning up land everywhere, building a military airstrip, roads everywhere, a tent city housing thousands of men, portable fuel depots holding hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel and covering the hills with cannons and anti-aircraft batteries. The locals could only look on in amazement as their peaceful tropical island was transformed almost overnight into a massive military fortress. Bora Bora in short order became America's new Pearl Harbour. It was never attacked during the war, and after 1945, the Americans left as quickly as they had arrived, leaving the still-shocked locals waving aloha and wondering what had hit them. This is a true story; I don't have sufficient imagination to make up something so unbelievable. Bora Bora today is a prime vacation destination. After all, it has all the facilities! It forms part of our Tahiti and French Polynesia map and is 170 nautical miles west of the island of Tahiti. The only question that I still have is Why Bora Bora of all the possible destinations in the Pacific for the Americans to pick to fortify?

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WORRISOME DEVELOPMENTS ARE OCCURING

The war in Ukraine continues unabated, and now the war in Israel/Gaza seems to be spinning out of control. It seems that outside parties, mostly Iran, seem to want to escalate matters. The Iranians sponsor numerous militant groups, such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthi rebels in Yemen. Now, for reasons that escape me, Iran has attacked Pakistan. Why? Who is next? Iran is also directly attacking American forces in Iraq, as well as using proxies to do the same in Syria. Turkey is attacking Kurdish forces in Syria as well. South Africa is muddying the waters by bringing a spurious charge before the International Court. All this is alarming; not that any of us can influence unfolding events, but it also influences travel, and that also concerns us.

FEBRUARY AND VALENTINES: ITS ORIGINS

We all know that February is the shortest month of the year, but why? Why not March, or August? The answer goes back to the earliest days of the Roman empire, when all ten months were 28 days long. February is the only month to retain its Roman historical designation, but again, why? The answer is Valentine's Day, which falls in the exact middle of the month, on the 14th day. Why February, though? Why not January, or November? The answer comes back to what we call Valentine's Day and what the Romans called Lupercalia. This was the day set aside in the Roman annual calendar to mark the rite of passage of young men into adulthood. It was a great ceremony and it included a matchmaking component, as the young adult was now allowed to marry, something of enormous importance in a society where life tended to be very short by modern standards (about 50 years). Thus, the festival assumed great significance, similar, I suppose to a noble girl being presented at court in the spring of her 18th birthday in Victorian times, in the hope of making a 'suitable' match. In modern times, we do things a bit differently, but the basics of this system has existed for more than two thousand years.

As Christianity spread and eventually dominated the Roman era, this 'pagan' ceremony was incorporated into Christianity and rebranded as a Christian remembrance day for two men who were executed by Emperor Claudius. Both were apparently named Valentine, so that is what the 14th of February commemorates in the church calendar. It has nothing to do with love or romance, according to the church! However, we now had Saint Valentine's Day in the Catholic calendar, and this passed on to the Protestant churches in due course. As the Roman Empire declined, the rite of passage to adulthood continued and gradually the day reverted to its Roman antecedents of adulthood and the pairing of couples; in modern parlance, romance. As literacy spread, it became a day for young men to profess their affection for a fair lady by writing a poem. This was particularly influenced by Geoffrey Chaucer in the 15th Century. The notion of 'courtly love' spread through Europe and is still popular today via greeting cards. This practice expanded during Victorian times by adding small gifts, such as a bouquet of flowers or a box of sweets as a token of affection.

Today, Valentine's Day (now without the Saint attached) is celebrated around the world. In Western countries, romance still dominates, while in Eastern societies, expressing kindness towards close friends and business associates and affection to extended family members is deemed appropriate. At its heart, this Roman rite of passage has morphed into a celebration of love, family appreciation, and human connection. I doubt that many Roman patriarchs would see the similarity, but this is the only pagan celebration to have survived for more than two thousand years, predating even Christmas. That is why February is the only month that has 28 days.

As a last comment, 2024 is a Leap Year, where February has 29 days instead of its normal 28. This is because we no longer use the Roman, or Julian, calendar, as we now realize that the earth actually takes 365 and a quarter days to circle the sun. It makes no sense to somehow add a quarter of a day per year, so we save up the quarters and bring the calendar back to what it should be every fourth year. Theoretically, anyone born on the 29th should only celebrate their birthdays once every four years, but governmental officialdom dictates that for all legal matters, including birthdays, all individuals are deemed to have been born on the 28th day of February if born in a Leap Year. Similarly, all legal transactions are deemed to fall on the 28th, even if their actual date of happening is the 29th, so a mortgage taken out on the 29th is still payable on the 28th of non-Leap Years.

WORK IN PROGRESS - all sellers/librarians please note

ITMB, as of early February, 2024, 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.

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Alberta, a popular title, is approaching the end of its current edition. A new version is being prepared; no ETA.

Alberta/Saskatchewan South Half is at press and expected in early March.

Appalachian Trail is at press and expected during February.

Antarctica is almost out of copies. A fresh printing has already gone to press; no ETA.

Borneo is out of print. A fresh edition has been sent to press, no ETA.

Cuzco and Region is approaching the end of its print run. A new edition is being prepared. No ETA.

Hadrian's Wall, a new map for ITMB, is now at press and expected in March.

Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming is now out of print. A new edition is being prepared, no ETA.

India North and Northwest is out of print and discontinued. A new map of **Northern India** is in preparation for release in 2025. In the meantime, please continue to order our excellent map of **India**.

India South and North-east is out of print and discontinued. It has been replaced by our excellent map of **South India**, which was released last year.

Krakow is now out of print. A new double-sided map has been printed and should arrive during April.

Mexico City/Central Mexico is out of print. A fresh edition has been sent to press and is expected in early April. Please continue ordering using the older ISBN for now.

Muscat and Oman is a new ITMB title, currently at press and expected in March. Our existing map of **Yemen and Oman** is still in print and is available.

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. The new map will combine NWT and Nunavut in a double-sided format and should be available during April.

USA Central is now out of print and replaced by **Mississippi River**, which is an accurate name for the mid-west of the USA, in that it is the original Louisiana Purchase area that transformed the USA overnight into becoming a huge country. However, methinks that we would have been wiser to stick to central or mid-west USA as a name.

USA East is now out of print and has been replaced by **USA East Coast**, a much better map.

NEW RELEASES in February, 2024

California Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2024 1:900,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771291842 UPC 817712918420 \$13.95 cdn/us E/GBP 12.95 – The American State of California has almost as many residents as all of Canada. I wonder how many of them are ex-pat Canucks? Regardless, this double-sided map shows the attractions of the state in amazing detail. Side 1 concentrates on the northern half, with a large inset map of San Francisco. A fairly large portion of Nevada shows as well, but with less detail. Side 2 continues south to the Mexican border and east to Arizona, with a detailed inset map of central Los Angeles included. By the shape of California, all of southern Nevada is included as well, including the all-important wasteland of Las Vegas. All motorways are clearly shown, including those in greater Los Angeles. All state highways are also shown, as well as most secondary connecting roads. Parks, points of interest, beaches, redwood forests, and distances between major communities are also shown. The state is blessed with interesting offshore islands, such as Catalina, San Clemente, and the Channel Islands, all of which are included. Printed on waterproof stone paper, this map is **AVAILABLE**.

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Germany Travel Reference Map 3rd Ed. 2024:1:675,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771293259 UPC 817712932594 \$14.95 cdn/us E/GBP 10.90 – Germany is Europe's most populous country and is a very popular travel destination. It is also noteworthy for being the first country in the world to generate more than 50% of its energy needs from renewable sources, something we in North America should emulate. It also has Europe's most advanced rapid rail networks, which we emphasize on our map. Side 1 concentrates on the northern half of the country, from the Danish frontier south to the Ruhr region and Magdeburg, with side 2 covering the south. Small portions of adjoining countries also show. We have updated the motorway network, showing portions under construction where necessary. The main highway network is shown in great detail, as this is the best way to explore traditional Germany. Major points of interest are shown, but the country is replete with castles, fortresses, manor houses, gardens, and other touristic attractions. We have used the German names for cities, which sometimes varies from commonly-known English nomenclature. This only affects a few urban areas, such as Koln for Cologne, or München for Munich; 99.9% of German place names are the same in English and German. The map is printed on waterproof stone paper for durability. It is, of course, **AVAILABLE**.

NEW RELEASES in January, 2024

Toronto & Southern Ontario Travel Reference Map 5th Ed. 2024 1:12,000/1:600,000 ISBN 9781771298056 UPC 817712980564 \$10.95 cdn/us E/GBP 9.95 – Toronto is the largest city in Canada and the 5th most populous in all of North America. Strategically located on the north shore of Lake Ontario, it is halfway between Chicago and Montreal and within easy access to NYC and points south. Its hinterland consists of 100,000,000 people, so this is a city worthy of note! Historically, it dates from 1793, but its antecedents go back many more centuries. The name means 'Meeting Place' in indigenous annals, and it grew rapidly as a centre of commerce and industry over the successive decades to dominate Canada. It is also the capital of the Province of Ontario and the centrepiece for most banks and insurance companies operating in Canada. Touristically, it has the largest airport in the country and is the access point for most flights from the USA and Europe, so tends to be where most visitors arrive. The map shows the core of a vast urban expanse that contains almost all of the touristic sites in the city, from the lovely recreational outer harbour islands to tony Yorkville and High Park, in the west. All tram lines are shown (Toronto has the largest fixed rail tram network in the world), as well as the extensive subway system (recently expanded), and an inset map showing all of Metro Toronto. Side 2 concentrates on part of southern Ontario, from Detroit to Kingston and north to Barrie. This would assist visitors driving to Niagara Falls, which is still the Number 1 attraction of North America. **AVAILABLE**

US East Coast Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2024 1:1,500,000 ISBN 9781771298575 UPC 817712985750 \$11.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95 – This is a new title for ITMB, portraying the Atlantic coast states from Maine to Florida. It replaces our former map of USA East Half, which has been discontinued. Side 1 covers from the northern tip of Maine to partway through North Carolina and west to Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania. Side 2 continues south to Key West at the southern tip of Florida and west as far as Atlanta and just short of New Orleans. This is a companion map to our new map covering the central portion of the USA called Mississippi (essentially the Louisiana Purchase territory). The USA seems to fit naturally into north-south components – the Atlantic Coast is the former British colonies with the addition of Spanish Florida, and the central portion covers the lands affected by the Mississippi River basin and the great plains known as the Mid-West. This particular map is one for exploration of a vast portion of the USA from top to bottom. It would be useful for anyone living in this segment of the country to explore and would suit foreign visitors a readable map of an important part of America. Where exactly is Gettysburg, anyway? Well, it's on the map, as well as Disneyworld, the Boone Hall Plantation, and Nantucket. This is a map for exploring! So go explore. **AVAILABLE**

NEW RELEASES DURING NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, 2023

Easter Island & Santiago Travel Reference Map 6th Ed. 2020 1:24,200/1:12,500 ISBN 9781771292696 UPC 817712926968 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95 – **AVAILABLE**

Mexico Pacific Coast Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2023 1:1,500,000 ISBN 9781771294805 UPC 817712948052 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95 – **AVAILABLE**

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Osaka and Western Japan Travel Reference Map 3rd Ed. 2024 1:12,500/1:600,000 ISBN 9871771295956 UPC 817712959560 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95 – AVAILABLE

Philippines Travel Reference Map 6th Ed. 2023 1:1,100,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9871771296298 UPC 817712962980 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 10.90 – AVAILABLE

Zambia and Eastern Africa Travel Reference Map 5th Ed. 2020 1:1,680,000 ISBN 9781771299213 UPC 817712992130 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95 – AVAILABLE

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