

Maps of the World

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

Because a map conveys information visually, it is often the best way for presenting facts about the size, shape, and appearance of our world and about the changes that people have imposed on the world.

Some world maps show the mountains, rivers, oceans, and plains that make up the face of the Earth. Some show only the boundaries that divide our world into nations. Others show the Earth's resources, population centers, or earthquake activity. Some combine many kinds of information.

World maps available from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) range from a one-sheet desktop reference aid to a six-sheet wall map.

This Dynamic Planet

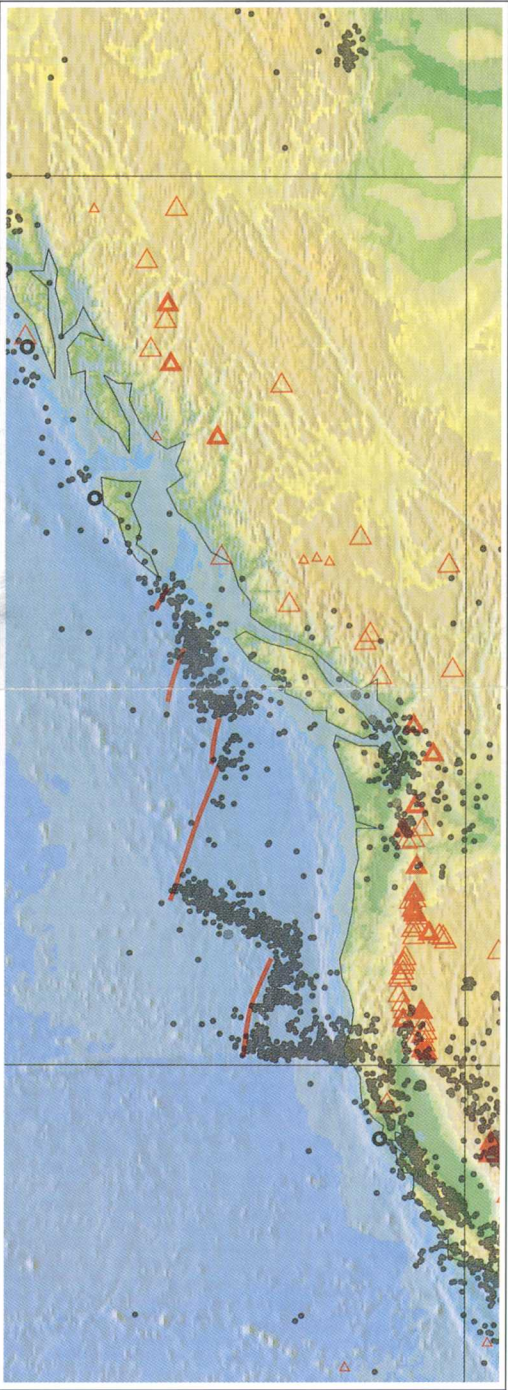
A World Map of Volcanoes, Earthquakes, and Plate Tectonics—This map shows the Earth's physiographic features overlaid by its volcanoes and earthquake epicenters and by the movement of its major tectonic plates.

Compiled and published jointly by the Smithsonian Institution and the USGS, this computer-generated map of the world provides a base map that shows the topography of the land surface and the sea-floor. Color and shaded relief help to distinguish important features.

From the Volcano Reference File of the Smithsonian Institution, nearly 1,450 volcanoes active during the past 10,000 years are plotted on the map in four categories. From the files of the National Earthquake Information Center, USGS, epicenters selected from 1,300 large events from 1897 onward and from 140,000 instrumentally recorded earthquakes from 1960 to the present are plotted on the map according to magnitude and depth.

This map is intended as a teaching aid for classroom use and as a general reference for research. It is designed to show prominent global features when viewed from a distance, with more detailed features visible on closer inspection.

This map's Mercator projection was produced at a scale of 1:30,000,000 at the Equator (1" equals about 473 miles). The 58" x 41" map was printed in 1989.



Part of "This Dynamic Planet—A World Map of Volcanoes, Earthquakes, and Plate Tectonics"

Outline Maps of the World

The USGS publishes two outline maps of the world. Both are printed in two colors and use the Van der Grinten projection centered on the Americas. The outline format makes them useful as base maps on which you can compile and display special information.

The 48" x 33" map shows the boundaries and names of nations. It shows their capitals and major cities. It was published at a scale of 1:40,000,000 (1" equals about 631 miles) and was printed in 1988.

The 25" x 18" map shows only the boundaries and names of nations. It was produced at a scale of 1:80,000,000 (1" equals about 1,262 miles) and was printed in 1983.

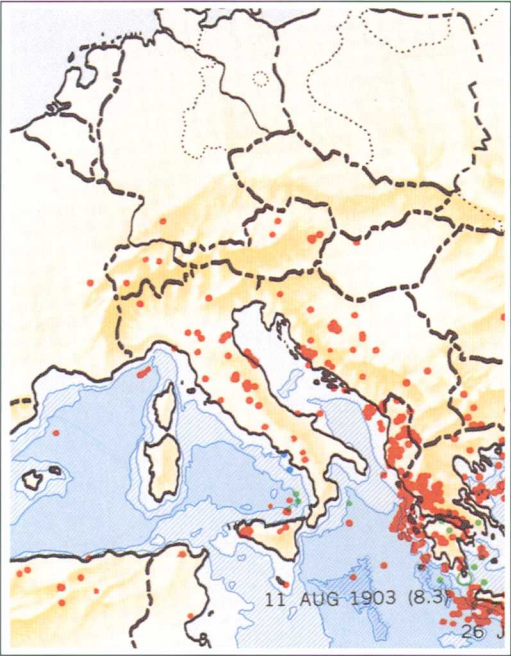


Part of "Outline Map of the World" at a scale of 1:40,000,000

World Seismicity Map

This 48" x 36" map shows patterns of earthquake activity between 1963 and 1972. Symbols show the epicenter and magnitudes of surface waves. Three colors represent the principal depth-of-focus classes of earthquakes in the seismic zones.

Compiled in 1974 by the USGS from earthquake data of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), it was produced at a scale of 1:39,000,000 (1" equals about 615 miles). Cast on a Mercator projection, it is centered on the Americas.



Part of "World Seismicity Map"

Political Map of the World

The USGS sells a 41" x 22" political map of the world made by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), dated 1992. This multicolored map shows political boundaries, names of nations, capital cities, undetermined borders, and disputed territories. It was produced at a scale of 1:35,000,000 (1" equals about 552 miles) and is based on the Robinson projection.



Part of "Political Map of the World"

Topographic Maps of the World

The USGS sells three topographic maps of the world that show international boundaries, country names, capitals, and selected cities and towns. All three, produced by the Defense Mapping Agency, use the Mercator projection centered on the Pacific Ocean.

Multicolor tints distinguish topographic, hypso-metric, hydrographic, and bathymetric features. Shaded relief accentuates mountain ranges. Shipping lanes are also shown. Clock time is displayed at 15-degree intervals of longitude. Marginal data on the maps include a sheet index, a legend for populated places, ice limits, boundary symbols, and tint-band guides.

World Map, series 1145, is on a single sheet 56" x 42". The scale is 1:30,000,000 (1" equals about 473 miles). The information is current as of 1976.

World Map, series 1144, is composed of three sheets that assemble to 74" x 55". Each sheet is 28" x 55". The scale is 1:22,000,000 (1" equals about 347 miles). The information is current as of 1992.

World Map, series 1150, is composed of six sheets that assemble to a 9' 8 1/2" x 7' 2" wall map. Average sheet size is 42" x 54". The scale is 1:14,000,000 (1" equals about 221 miles). Actual time boundary lines are shown. The information is current as of 1987.



Part of "World Map," series 1145



Part of "World Map," sheet 3 of 3, series 1144



Part of "World Map," sheet 3 of 6, series 1150

Special Maps

Many other special world maps are produced by the USGS. You can learn more about these world maps and other technical maps from any Earth Science Information Center (ESIC).

Where to Find Maps of the World

Many world maps are listed in "CIA Maps and Publications Released to the Public," which is available from the CIA Public Affairs Office, Washington, DC 20505; (703) 351-2053.

The USGS fact sheet "Looking for an Old Map" explains how to obtain information about the rich collections of historical world maps in the Library of Congress and the National Archives. You can obtain the fact sheet from any ESIC.

Many types of world maps, charts, atlases, and globes are also available from commercial firms and geographical societies.

Some of the finest map collections are held by public or university libraries that have been designated as Federal Map Depository Libraries. These institutions hold copies of most federally produced maps, as well as many historic maps from foreign countries. They are available for

public inspection. To obtain a list of Federal Depository Libraries, look in the "USGS State Catalogs of Topographic and Other Published Maps" or contact any ESIC.

For more information about world maps, contact any ESIC or call 1-800-USA-MAPS.

To purchase world maps for sale by the USGS, call or write:

USGS Map Sales
Box 25286
Denver, CO 80225
(303) 236-7477