



KEN'S MUSINGS...

A World Bigger Than the Map Shows

I have sailed the Arctic, cruised European rivers, and I am about to add South America to that list. Every one of those trips has taught me the same thing: a map only tells you so much. The real size, the real feel, the real story of a place only comes through when you are standing in it.

This issue takes you from the ice edge of the Northwest Passage, to the vineyards of the Douro, to the rhythms of the Magdalena River in Colombia. Three very different corners of the world, and proof that there is always more out there than the map lets on.

I would love to help you find your next one.

Why Does Africa Look So Small on the Map?

Take a look at almost any world map hanging in a classroom or office, and Africa looks about the same size as Greenland. In reality, Africa is roughly fourteen times larger. The culprit is a map projection built four hundred and fifty years ago for sailors, not classrooms, and it has been quietly shrinking the tropics ever since.

The Equal Earth projection fixes that, showing every continent at its true, proportional size. There is a lot more to this one, plus the map itself in full, waiting for you on page 4.

TRAVEL TREND

Shelf Discovery: The Supermarket Culinary Tour

The newest trend making the rounds, spearheaded by Gen Z travellers on TikTok, skips the sit-down restaurant altogether. Instead, travellers are dedicating whole vacation days to exploring local grocery stores, convenience chains like 7-Eleven in Japan, and neighbourhood supermarkets. The snack, condiment and ingredient aisles become a kind of cultural museum, and a wonderfully budget friendly way to taste a destination.

I love this one. Some of my favourite finds on a trip have come from wandering a local market with no plan at all. Ask me about the port day grocery run next time we are planning a sailing together, it might just become your favourite excursion.

IN THIS ISSUE

Northwest Passage Full Crossing. A twenty-five-day full transit with HX Expeditions, August 2027. I am sailing on this one myself.

Enticing Douro, Taste of Christmas. Seven nights on the Douro with AmaWaterways, November 2027. I am sailing on this one myself.

Wonders of Colombia. A new Magdalena River departure from AmaWaterways, now open for booking. I am sailing on this one myself.

Three Places Worth Seeing at Their True Size

This issue's featured departures, all confirmed and open for booking.

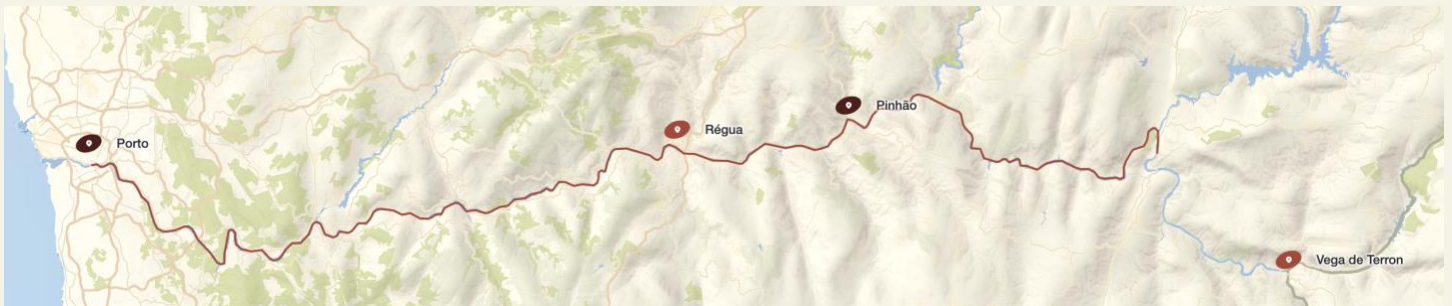


The route: New York to Nuuk, through the Northwest Passage, to Nome and Seattle

1. Northwest Passage Full Crossing, August 2027

A twenty-five-day expedition with HX Expeditions aboard the MS Fridtjof Nansen, sailing the full transit from Greenland to Alaska. This is one of the rare full crossings offered anywhere, an experience fewer travellers have completed than have stood on the summit of Everest. Book before August 2026 for a special advisor funded incentive.

Full details: [Click Here For Northwest Passage Itinerary and Information](#)



The route: Porto to Vega de Terron along the Douro River Valley

2. Enticing Douro, Taste of Christmas, November 2027

Join me aboard AmaWaterways' AmaSintra for a seven night Douro River cruise sailing November 26 to December 3, 2027, with optional Lisbon and Santiago de Compostela extensions. I am sailing on this departure myself. Late November brings golden vineyards, quieter villages, and the start of the holiday season along one of Europe's most beautiful rivers.

Full details: [Click Here for Enticing Douro Itinerary and Information](#)



The route: Barranquilla to Cartagena along the Magdalena River

3. Wonders of Colombia, Magdalena River

New from AmaWaterways: a seven-night journey along the Magdalena River aboard the intimate AmaMelodia, from Cartagena to Barranquilla. Expect Caribbean rhythms, colonial history, and a side of South America that very few river cruisers have discovered yet. Full itinerary now available on my site. Contact me now for early departure dates and pricing.

Full details: [Click Here For Wonders of Colombia Itinerary and Information](#)

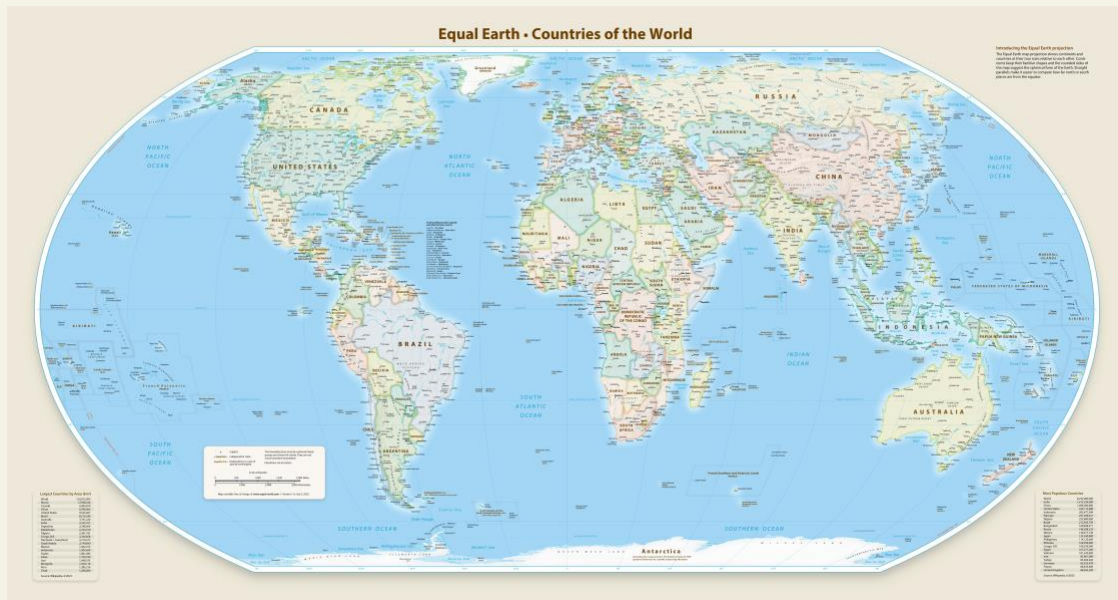
A NOTE FROM US

Why We Almost Never Sail Alone

You will find us on all three of these departures this year. My husband and I are aboard the Northwest Passage crossing in August, the Douro in November, and yes, Colombia too. Travelling together, whether it is with each other, with family, with the friends we already have, with longtime clients who have become close friends, or with someone joining us for the very first time, is simply how we like to see the world.

Some of our favourite people started out as names on a booking list. A shared sunrise on deck, a long dinner in port, a laugh over a shore excursion gone slightly sideways, that is usually all it takes for a client to become a friend. If you have ever wondered what it would be like to travel alongside your advisor rather than just book through one, this is your chance.

If any of these three grab your interest, get in touch and let's talk about joining us.



Equal Earth projection, countries shown at their true relative size. Map by Tom Patterson, equal-earth.com, free to use.

The Real Size of Africa

Most of us grew up with the same mental map of the world, and most of us grew up with it wrong. The map hanging in almost every classroom, office and browser tab is built on the Mercator projection, created in 1569 by the Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator for one very specific job: helping sailors hold a straight compass bearing across open ocean.

That trick works beautifully for navigation, but it comes at a cost. To keep angles and directions accurate, the Mercator projection stretches land the further it sits from the equator. Countries near the poles are inflated. Countries near the equator, Africa chief among them, are squeezed down to a fraction of their true visual size.

The effect is dramatic. On a standard Mercator map, Africa and Greenland look like similar sized landmasses. In reality Africa is roughly fourteen times larger than Greenland, and its true footprint is big enough to hold the United States, China, India and most of Europe within its borders, with room to spare.

By the numbers

- Africa's actual land area: about 30.3 million square kilometres
- Greenland's actual land area: about 2.2 million square kilometres
- Africa is large enough to contain the United States, China, India, and most of Europe combined
- The Mercator projection is 456 years old and was designed for sailors, not classrooms

The distortion did not go unnoticed. In March 2017, Boston Public Schools switched classroom maps to the Gall Peters projection, an equal area map that corrects the size bias but badly stretches shape. That debate is what led cartographers Bojan Šavrič, Bernhard Jenny and Tom Patterson to publish the Equal Earth projection in 2018, the map shown above. It keeps every continent's true proportional size while preserving natural, recognisable shapes.

I like this story because it says something true about travel too. A map, a brochure, even a photo, can only tell you so much about a place. The scale, the atmosphere, the feeling of actually being there only comes through once you have made the trip yourself. That is exactly what the three departures in this issue offer: a chance to experience the Arctic, Portugal and Colombia at their true size, not just their size on a map.

Wishing you a wonderful next adventure, Ken Graham