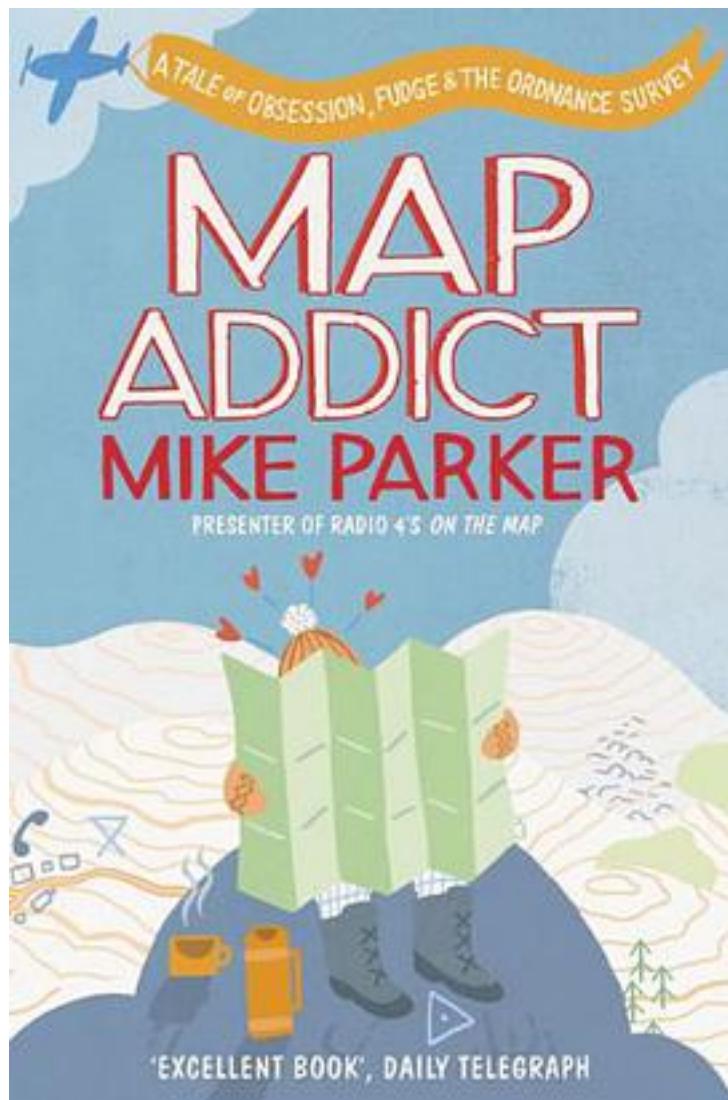


Map Addict



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My name is Mike and I am a map addict. There, it's said!" Maps not only show the world, they help it turn. On an average day, we will consult some form of map approximately a dozen times, often without even noticing: checking the A-Z, the road atlas, or the Sat Nav, scanning the tube or bus map, a quick Google online, or hours wasted flying over a virtual Earth, navigating a way around a shopping center, watching the weather forecast, planning a walk or a trip, catching up on the news, booking a holiday or hotel. Maps pepper logos, advertisements, illustrations, books, web pages, and newspaper and magazine articles: they are a cipher for every area of human existence. At a stroke, they convey precise information about topography, layout, history, politics, and power. They are the unsung heroes of life, and this guide sings their song. There are some fine, dry tomes out there about the history and development of cartography: this is not one of them. This exploration mixes wry observation with hard fact and considerable research, unearthing the offbeat, the unusual, and the downright pedantic in a celebration of all things maps. In *Map Addict*, we learn the location of what has officially been named by the OS as the most boring square kilometer in the land; we visit the town fractured into dozens of little parcels of land split between two different countries and trek around many other weird borders of Britain and Europe; we test the theories that the new city of Milton Keynes was built to a pagan alignment and that women can't read maps. Combining history, travel, politics, memoir, and oblique observation in a highly readable, and often very funny, style, Mike Parker confesses how his own impressive map collection was founded on a virulent teenage shoplifting habit, ponders how a good leftie can be so gung-ho about British cartographic imperialism, and wages a one-man war against the moronic blandishments of the Sat Nav age.

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