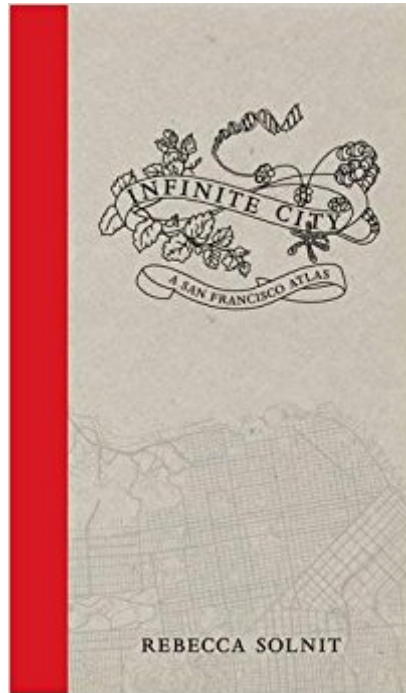




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# Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas



## Synopsis

What makes a place? *Infinite City*, Rebecca Solnit's brilliant reinvention of the traditional atlas, searches out the answer by examining the many layers of meaning in one place, the San Francisco Bay Area. Aided by artists, writers, cartographers, and twenty-two gorgeous color maps, each of which illuminates the city and its surroundings as experienced by different inhabitants, Solnit takes us on a tour that will forever change the way we think about place. She explores the area thematically—connecting, for example, Eadweard Muybridge's foundation of motion-picture technology with Alfred Hitchcock's filming of *Vertigo*. Across an urban grid of just seven by seven miles, she finds seemingly unlimited landmarks and treasures—butterfly habitats, queer sites, murders, World War II shipyards, blues clubs, Zen Buddhist centers. She roams the political terrain, both progressive and conservative, and details the cultural geographies of the Mission District, the culture wars of the Fillmore, the South of Market world being devoured by redevelopment, and much, much more. Breathtakingly original, this atlas of the imagination invites us to search out the layers of San Francisco that carry meaning for us—or to discover our own infinite city, be it Cleveland, Toulouse, or Shanghai.

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## Customer Reviews

A joyous book. (San Francisco Chronicle 2010-11-03) Inventive and affectionate. (Lise Funderburg New York Times Book Review 2010-12-05) This nicely designed book offers a collection of essays and subject specific maps anyone who loves San Francisco will enjoy poring over. (Bob Walch Bookloons.com 2011-10-18) Brilliantly disorients our native sense of place. (Jonathon Keats San Francisco Magazine 2010-12-01) This is an amazing and thought-provoking book. (Geist 2012-11-05) A richly textured graphic book that no electronic format can master yet, Infinite City features Rebecca Solnit as cultural and historical tour guide through the city she calls home. (Bridget Kinsella Shelf Awareness 2010-10-18) A fresh and intriguing spin on mapmaking. (Elizabeth Ryan Utne 2010-11-01) A thrilling new book. (Nicole Gluckstern San Francisco Bay Guardian 2010-12-01) A gorgeously produced collection of maps and essays. (Nikil Saval Los Angeles Review Of Books 2011-07-28) Breathtakingly original. (San Francisco Bay Guardian 2010-11-23) A treasure of intricate, intimate maps. (Adam Hartzell SF360 2010-12-20)

"At last a field book with the sense of San Francisco; the non sense, the real sense, the mysteries of the microclimates, gays and butterflies, gangs, boulevards and mysterious alleys. All here!" Michael McClure "Downright near infinite, at any rate, the good fortune of a city blessed with such antic chroniclers as Rebecca Solnit, First Citizen of the Imagination, and her entire splendid crew. There's one map missing, though, from this marvelous little volume: the MRI of any reader lucky enough to wander into its myriad graven precincts; synapses firing, dendrites scintillating away, a whole mad happy carnival of fresh neuronal associations." Lawrence Weschler, author of Everything that Rises: A Book of Convergences "Solnit's writing is born of intense reverie and deep reading, passionate inquiry and political defiance; she is a lyric questor for the texture of everyday life, and she attends to places and to their variety and particularity with an exhilarating form of attention that illuminates and transforms her subjects. Infinite City is a marvellous atlas, a new approach to history-making and storytelling; it's also a highly original praise song to many San Franciscos, a multi-layered and polyphonic testament, alert to the play of detail and to the grand design, to the shadows of memory that fall, the restless shifts in the urban scene and the vital energy of overlooked subjectivities." Marina Warner

The beautiful "Infinite City" belongs on any list of essential San Francisco books. Rebecca Solnit

and her collaborators have taken a core sample of the endless layers of San Francisco history and laid it out in twenty-two brilliantly imagined maps and eighteen essays exploring the city's history, geography, demography, biology, and myth. "Infinite City" is vast enough to encompass the Coliseum, Coronet and Alexandria theaters; the Pipevine swallowtail, Satyr anglewing, and Orange sulfur butterflies; the Yelamu, Aramai, and Urebure peoples; the "McKittrick Hotel", "Argosy Book Shop", and Ernie's; Josephine McCrackin, Carrie Stevens Walter, and Barbara Eastman; Bechtel, RoboteX, and Jeppesen; Jimbo's Bop City, Ann's 440, and the Six Gallery; Acme Export Packing, the Pacific Far East Line, and Triple A Machine Shop; and the Richmond Branch of the San Francisco Public Library. The book itself is as lovingly designed as anything McSweeney's has published, proof that until we stop needing tactile pleasures, the screen will never replace the page.

I bought it for a friend who grew up in San Francisco and who loves exploring different books & media about S.F. He fell in Love with it I will be buying another copy for myself since it is a fascinating variety of perspectives and colorful maps with interesting information.. I Love It!!

I was born and raised in the Oakland/ San Francisco Bay Area, living elsewhere in the country right now but this book brought my home right back to me. The atlas reminded me of childhood things like the canneries my mother worked in and the cast iron penny bank my father brought me from an excavating job he was on in the 1950s. I later discovered that bank was buried in the rubble of a building at the time of the great earthquake. If you know the bay you know it's sights, sounds and the blood that runs through it, if you're born there it's always with you and sometimes if you only lived there for a little while. It's history is filled with seekers, adventurers, dreamers and villains. Great calm and great calamity. Most of all it made me think of a place as an atlas. Any place is more than it's present appearance, this was an adventure in thinking differently and was written so beautifully it could only have been done by someone who knows the city's heart and soul, warts and all. I will definately read this over and over.

Anyone who wants to learn about San Francisco on a level much deeper than any magazine article, blog, or newspaper-- BUY THIS! It is incredible. I just moved to SF in September, and I really wanted to dive into some unique history and stories about this city. This book was the answer. It's a great conversation piece and also a great way to plan adventures throughout San Francisco.

This is one of the best books about San Francisco --if you want more than the usual tourist

information. It is smart, compelling, and full of very well-designed and interesting maps. The author provides a fascinating mix of history and contemporary information, and strives to provide readers with more than the standard historical accounts. Best of all, she includes information that only the most observant, keen-minded inhabitant would know and experience. Smart, funny, useful . . . really, it's the best.

I had to read this for a class, and it was hard for me to follow. Some of my fellow students really loved it, while others of us just couldn't get into it. I think you will either totally love this book or ...not... I think it helps if you live or have lived in San Francisco. Then the places mean more to you.

Not what I expected. A strange collection of places and things in SF.

Nice book!

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