

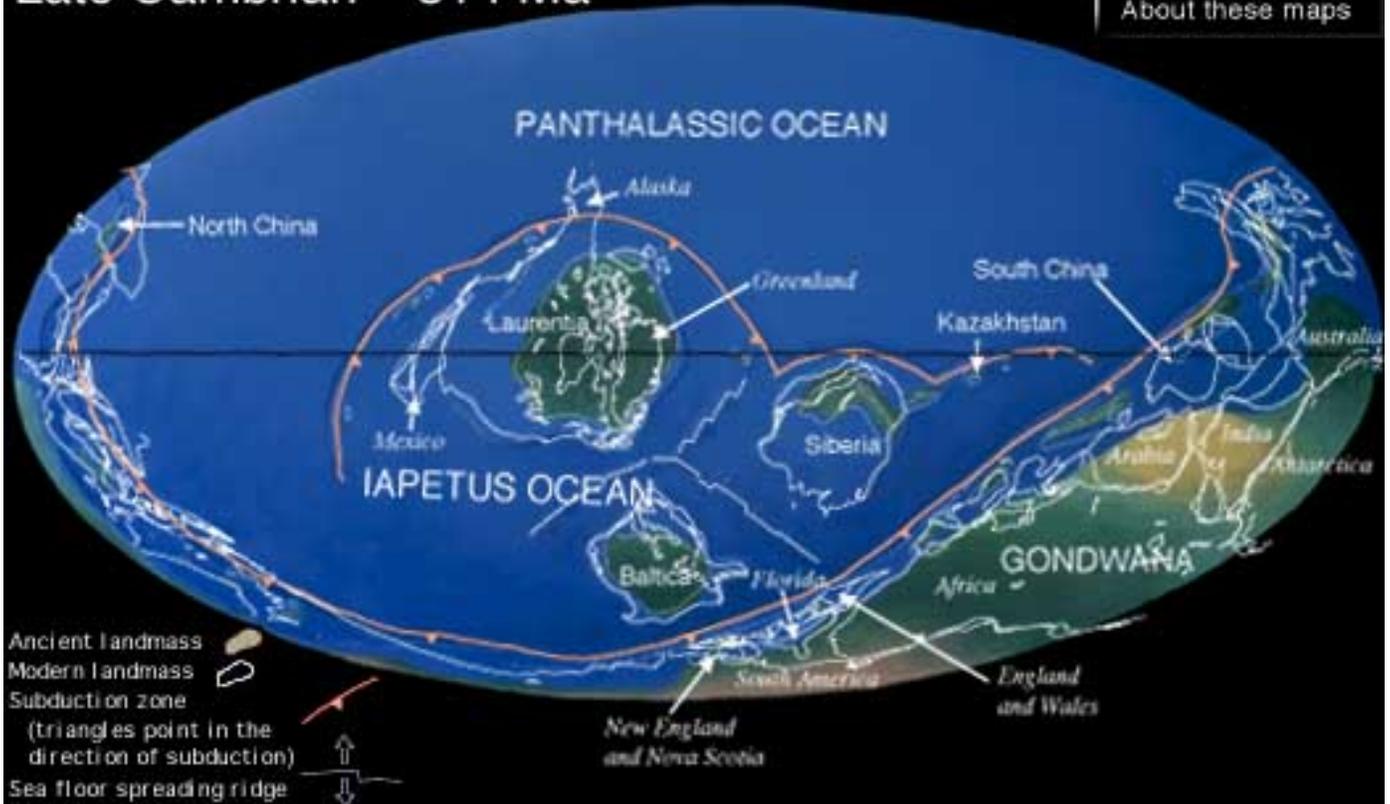


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USGS Geology in the Parks

Late Cambrian 514 Ma

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About these maps





Earth 514 million years ago

[Late Cambrian](#)

What's going on here?

- Seas flooded the continents during much of the [Cambrian](#). The continents of Laurentia (the [core of what is now North America](#)), Baltica (Northern Europe), and Siberia split apart and a new ocean, the Iapetus Ocean, was born.
- Notice that the core of North America, Laurentia, has moved northward so that it's sitting at the Equator. During the Cambrian much of the continent is flooded by a shallow, tropical sea. Thick deposits [limestone](#) formed from the remains of countless shelled marine animals that died and accumulated on the sea bottom. These ancient Cambrian limestones are preserved within many National Parks.
- That huge continent straddling the South Pole and Equator is **Gondwana**, one of the supercontinent remnants from the [Late Proterozoic](#).

Reconstructing ancient Earth

These remarkable figures are produced by [C.R. Scotese](#) and the [PALEOMAP project](#). Geologists call these illustrations **paleogeographic reconstructions**, because they illustrate the reconstructed geography of our Earth at some time in the past.

Making a paleogeographic reconstruction begins by examining several lines of evidence including: [paleomagnetism](#), [magnetic anomalies](#), [paleobiogeography](#), [paleoclimatology](#), and **geologic history**. By combining all available evidence, geologists are able to construct paleogeographic maps, such as these, that interpret how the geography might have appeared at a specific location and time in the past. Paleogeographic maps are continually being refined as more evidence is collected.

To find out more about how paleogeographic reconstructions are made visit the [PALEOMAP project site](#).

- Learn more about **this time period** at the [PALEOMAP project site](#).
- Learn more about [geologic time](#).
- Learn more about [plate tectonics](#).

Move [forward](#) or [back](#) in time.

| [Today](#) | [0.018](#) | [14](#) | [50](#) | [69](#) | [94](#) | [152](#) | [195](#) | [237](#) | [255](#) | [306](#) | [356](#) | [390](#) | [425](#) |
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Time in millions of years. Jump back to visit any time!

Scotese, C. R., 1997. Paleogeographic Atlas, PALEOMAP Progress Report 90-0497, Department of Geology, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas, 37 pp.

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| [National Parks by Tectonic Regions](#) |
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