The above map illustrates the migration of humanity across the Earth with all movement originating in Africa and with the estimated dates of arrival shown at key directions and locations. The dates are based on a number of scientifically validated estimates. They build upon the ‘Out of Africa model’ that assumes the spread of modern humans from their African origins across the globe, superseding any other human species that had lived in parts of the planet before (and sometimes at) Homo sapiens arrived.

The human migration pattern are drawn on top of a gridded population cartogram. This base map reflects the population density of humanity today, indicating how humanity’s journey relates to today’s defined population distribution. That density, with most humans now living in Africa, India and China, has been long established, and so this base map is similar to one showing area in proportion to all humans that have ever lived. In such a map, Europe would be a little smaller, and Australia and the Americas would be drawn even smaller than they are shown here.

The spatial evolution of humanity across Earth following genetic footprints started around 100,000 years ago – approximately 125,000 to 75,000 Before Current Era (BCE) – and took as long as into the year 1000 Current Era (CE) to reach the remotest parts of Oceania and possibly also the definite arrival on Madagascar.

Environmental changes kept humanity on the move and ever expanding. This led to geography leaving a footprint on our DNA as human migration resulted in genes being shaped and were shaped by their environments. This allows us today to compile this comprehensive picture of human migration. And yet, Homo sapiens managed to remain the only extant human species on the planet, leaving all other species of the genus Homo behind.

The dates are based on a number of different sources of data, including genetics, archaeology, and palaeoanthropology. The dates are approximate and continuously changing as new data is discovered and existing data is re-evaluated.

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