

Lunar New Year, South Pacific Style

To celebrate the Lunar New Year, six South Pacific nations combined to create an imaginative set that includes five miniature sheets and the first ever set of 3D stamps, shown here with descriptions from the designers.

Aitutaki: The main graphic of this two-stamp mini-sheet is the full combination of different characteristics of zodiac sheep, such as being wise, intelligent, honest and reliable. Although the sheep on the stamp is described as “quite plump,” it does not seem sluggish or silly looking. The action of the sheep standing stably on earth demonstrates its reliability and stability while the action of the sheep lightly raising its fore hoof and head turned backwards gives the feeling that the sheep wants to dance with the music it just heard.



Cook Islands: The sheep graphic on this two-stamp mini-sheet comes from the shape of the ancient ceramic sheep. Based on this, it is combined and interspersed with the pattern of colorful clouds to symbolize happiness and goodness. This design not only demonstrates the unique aesthetic feeling of the sheep through its slim shape, but also expresses the luckiness and blessing. The special plant held in the sheep’s mouth is ganoderma, which also reflects the best wishes for happiness, auspiciousness, health and longevity.



Niuafo’ou: This two-stamp mini-sheet highlights the prominent character of sheep. The overall design has been specially styled to ensure that the sheep is depicted in a traditional way while also incorporating modern design elements. The sheep is decorated with simple but elegant swirling cloud patterns that convey the message that “the spirit, the mind, and everything in the world will grow and cycle continually.” The swirling cloud patterns are combined by multi-color elements and are overlapping to form a style and personality that reflects the classical heritage as well as the modern atmosphere.



Penrhyn: The sheep on this issue was inspired by the lambs. The gentle, kind and adorable characteristics of lambs are always loved by people. Its chubby shape displays its honesty and cuteness. The peony on its forehead and its cheeky smile represent joy, auspiciousness, peace, safety and wealth.

Samoa: This mini-sheet presents two smiling sheep that symbolize the four seasons. The four seasons are divided into two groups with autumn and winter in one stamp and spring & summer in the other. The peony and plum on the forehead of the autumn and winter sheep and the chrysanthemum and lotus as clothes on the spring and summer sheep combine the elements of the four seasons into one. The design of this stamp set symbolizes the fact that as the four seasons come and go continuously, everything in the world will cycle and connect with each other.



Tonga: This is the first set of 3D stamps in the world issued by the Kingdom of Tonga Post, with a long history of issuing odd shaped and uniquely designed stamps.

The figure of the zodiac sheep on this issue breaks the conventional design of zodiac sheep images used on the previous stamps. The anthropomorphic approach has been applied to present a personified image of two cheeky, adorable and joyous zodiac sheep wearing the traditional Chinese costume. The sheep on the stamp holds the red Chinese knot with the large character on it meaning: blessings, with one hand, and shows the gesture of victory with the other. As well as the lucky clouds on its forehead and sheep-head shape shoes on its feet, it is not only full of rich Chinese folk flavor but it also gives a relaxed and happy atmosphere to the Chinese New Year. Tonga also issued this single in sheets of 16.



The six-nation set also is available in a Presentation Pack. Information on the Lunar New Year and other stamps of these South Pacific islands is available from https://pcistamps.com/Cook_Islands.php.