HAWAII
Monarchy, Republic, Territory, State
The state of Hawaii consists of eight large islands — Ni'ihau, Kauai, Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Kahoolawe, and Hawaii (also known as the “Big Island”) — plus 124 uninhabited small islands, reefs, and atolls. The entire archipelago stretches 1,524 miles east to west, making Hawaii not only the widest state in the Union but the longest island chain in the world.

The islands are the mountain tops of ancient under-sea volcanoes. They are situated over a “hot spot” beneath the Earth’s crust that continually pushes hot magma into the sea, which then builds up to form the largest mountain range in the world. The Big Island of Hawaii is the youngest island in the chain (a mere 800,000 years old), while the oldest of the main islands, Kaua’i, clocks in at around 6 million years. However, a young island named Loihi is forming some 3,000 feet below sea level off the southeast coast of Hawaii and should break the ocean surface in a few hundred thousand years.

Hawaii is the only U.S. state that grows coffee commercially, and any passionate coffee drinker knows that the coffee beans harvested in the Kona district on the Big Island can be brewed into one of the finest beverages in the world. In addition, the Hawaiian islands produce hundreds of thousands of tons of both sugar and pineapples each year. And did we mention those additional tons of macadamia nuts and orchids?

Archaeological evidence indicates that the first human visitors to the islands arrived approximately 1,600 years ago, but systematic settlement did not occur until about 300–400 BC when seafarers from the Marquesa Islands arrived. Other groups continued to appear, and oral tradition tells us that around 1175 AD a priest from Tahiti became powerful enough to change the earlier religious culture and introduce a system of social castes. He also initiated the hereditary line for the high priests and traditional kings that culminated in the reign of King Kamehameha I, who unified the islands under a single ruler in 1810.

Western sailors may have approached the islands in Spanish ships around 1627 AD, but the first clearly documented visit was made by Captain James Cook. He returned to the islands — which he named the Sandwich Islands, after his sponsor the 4th Earl of Sandwich — a year later, anchoring in Kealakekua Bay on the Big Island. However, after an initial welcome as a representative of the god Lono, a second visit to the sheltered bay proved disastrous. An argument arose over a stolen boat, and Captain Cook was killed.

In 1819 Kamehameha the Great died and was his son Prince Liholiho took the name Kamehameha II. Under the influence of the new king’s mother, the powerful Queen Kaahumanu who served as his premier, many of the old religious strictures and practices were abandoned. It was at this point of religious turmoil that many of the earliest of these stamps are damaged and show some degree of repair. The rarest is the 2-cent blue, which notoriously featured in the 1892 death of prominent French philatelist Gaston Leroux, who was killed by a fellow collector just so the murderer could steal the stamp for his own collection.

While no album featuring Hawaiian stamps would be complete without examples of those printed during its history as an independent kingdom and then as a republic, the sad truth is that many of the earliest of these stamps are beyond the reach of the beginner collector. Still, most of the stamps printed from 1864 on can be found used for affordable prices — with the occasional splurge. A satisfying collection of (say) the last monarchs of Hawaii (printed 1864–1886) or the first engraved stamps from the republic (printed in 1894) can be put together with comparative ease. And there is even a 2002 souvenir sheet that reproduces the fabled Missionary Stamps of 1851–52.

The Missionaries • 1851–52
Hawaii Scott 1–4

“The Missionaries” were so-named because most of the surviving examples were found on mail (often local newspapers) sent home by Christian missionaries in the islands. Only a small amount of the stamps were printed and those were on very thin pelure paper. Almost all the known copies are damaged and show some degree of repair. The rarest is the 2-cent blue, which was notably featured in the 1892 death of prominent French philatelist Gaston Leroux, who was killed by a fellow collector just so the murderer could steal the stamp for his own collection.

The Numerals • 1859–65
Hawaii Scott 12–26

The Numerals stamps are plain stamps in three denominations. Despite their unprepossessing appearance, they are rare enough to command significant prices. The words Uku Leta on the margin of the stamps mean “letter fee,” i.e., postage rate.

The Royal Family • 1861–91
Hawaii Scott 5–11

In December 1850, King Kamehameha III (1814–1854), the last son of Kamehameha the Great to rule the islands, established the first official post office in Honolulu, Hawaii. His long reign (he ascended the throne at age 11, following the death of his older brother) saw the arrival of large numbers of foreigners who would change the pace of island life beyond recall.
King Kamehameha IV

King Kamehameha IV (1834–1863) was actually the grandson of Kamehameha the Great through his daughter Kinau. During his brief nine-year reign he negotiated numerous international treaties, but faced growing agitation by the American sugar planters for annexation by the United States in order to protect their financial investments.

King Kamehameha V

King Kamehameha V (1830–1872) was the last direct descendant of Kamehameha the Great to sit on the throne, and the last to hold power in a traditional monarchy. After him, Hawaii’s rulers were confirmed by the Hawaiian Legislature. During his reign, a modern concrete facility named the Royal Post Office was built in Honolulu.

King David Kalakaua

King David Kalakaua (1836–1891) was elected king by the Hawaiian Legislature in 1874. Kalakaua was the first Hawaiian king to visit the United States. Nicknamed the “Merry Monarch,” he was responsible for the revival of the hula, banned by early missionaries, and wrote the words to “Hawaii Pono’i,” the national anthem. More importantly for stamp collectors, however, from 1863 to 1865 Kalakaua was the kingdom’s Postmaster General, making him the only known postmaster to become a king.

Princess Victoria Kamamalu

Princess Victoria Kamamalu (c1838–1866) was the first woman to be portrayed on a Hawaiian stamp. The sister of Kamehameha IV, she served as his prime minister or Kuhina Nui, a position she held until 1864, after her other brother, Lot, ascended the throne as Kamehameha V.

Princess Victoria

Princess Victoria Kamamalu (c1838–1866) was the first woman to be portrayed on a Hawaiian stamp. The sister of Kamehameha IV, she served as his prime minister or Kuhina Nui, a position she held until 1864, after her other brother, Lot, ascended the throne as Kamehameha V.

Princess Likelike

Princess Likelike (1851–1887) married a Scottish businessman who had moved to the islands and eventually was made Governor of Oahu. The couple’s beautiful daughter, Princess Victoria Kaiulani, was the subject of a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson in which he described her as “The island maiden, the island rose.”

Queen Emma

Queen Emma (1836–1885) was the wife of King Kamehameha IV, whom she had known from childhood. At her instigation, a hospital for the care of Hawaiians, later renamed the Queen's Hospital, was opened in 1860. Deeply pro-British and at one time herself a candidate for the throne, Queen Emma is remembered and beloved for her humanitarian efforts.

Queen Julia Kapiolani

Queen Julia Kapiolani (1834–1899) was the wife of David Kalakaua. She went to London in 1887 as his personal ambassador (along with his sister Princess Liliuokalani) for Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee. Kapiolani had a special concern for Hawaiian women and children, and was the guiding force behind the creation of the facility known today as the Kapiolani Women’s and Children’s Medical Center.

Prince William Pitt Leleiohoku

Prince William Pitt Leleiohoku (1855–1877) was a brother of David Kalakaua, who named him as his successor. A gifted musician, the prince left Hawaii a legacy of compositions that remain popular more than a hundred years after his untimely death from pneumonia at age 22.

Queen Emma

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The Provisionals

Following the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani, the interim government anticipated a swift annexation by the United States and to keep the mails moving simply overprinted existing stamps with “Provisional Gov’t 1893,” in red or black ink.
Hawaii — The Kingdom 1810–1893

The Royal Family

- Princess Victoria Kamamalu
  Hawaii Scott 30

- King Kamehameha IV
  Hawaii Scott 31

- King Kamehameha V
  Hawaii Scott 32

- King David Kalakaua
  Hawaii Scott 35

- Prince William Pitt Leleiohoku
  Hawaii Scott 36

- Princess Likelike
  Hawaii Scott 37

- Queen Julia Kapiolani
  Hawaii Scott 41

- King Kamehameha I
  Hawaii Scott 47

- Queen Emma
  Hawaii Scott 49

- The Provisionals
  Hawaii Scott 54

King Kamehameha I
By the late 1800s the superb port of Honolulu (the name means “Fair Haven”) was a thriving mercantile base for Pacific shipping. There were mule-drawn street cars, electric lights, and even an opera house. The view of the bustling harbor shows the lush Koolau Range, the remnants of an ancient shield volcano, rising above the city.

The Coat of Arms stamp issued by the new republic is a modification of the Provisional government's coat of arms, which was itself a modification of the Great Seal of the Hawaiian Monarchy. The design is an elaborate mixture of European heraldry and Hawaiian symbols.

The Coat of Arms
Hawaii Scott 80

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Port of Honolulu
Hawaii Scott 75

A statue to honor Kamehameha the Great was proposed by Walter Gibson, Minister in the court of King Kalakaua, to mark the centennial of Captain Cook’s “discovery” of the islands. The bronze statue was lost when the vessel on which it was being shipped from Germany sank. A duplicate statue was ordered and eventually (in February 1883) erected in front of Hawaii’s Judiciary Building. The original was salvaged and sold back to the Hawaiian government. It now stands in front of the Kohala Court House on the island of Kamehameha’s birth.

Kamehameha
Hawaii Scott 76

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Kamehameha
Hawaii Scott 76

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The Coat of Arms
Hawaii Scott 80

The Star and Palms stamp was printed during the last days of the Provisional government but was not issued until after the Republic of Hawaii was proclaimed. The design appears to reflect a hope that the palm tree islands would one day add another star to the United States’ flag.

The Star and Palms
Hawaii Scott 77

This is the only stamp from this period to include the words “Republic of Hawaii.” The specific clipper-type steamship named the S.S. Arawa has never been identified beyond a shadow of doubt, but its Maori name, which means “One which returns,” suggests an Australian-New Zealand connection. The four-masted Arawa, with its backup twin funnel stacks, served Hawaii as an inter-island packet ship.

S.S. Arawa
Hawaii Scott 78

Born in Honolulu in 1844 to missionary parents, Sanford Ballard Dole trained as a lawyer but spent most of his career involved in Hawaiian politics, first in the legislature and then as a member of the Supreme Court. After helping to orchestrate the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani, Dole went on to serve as President of the Provisional Government 1893–94, President of the Republic of Hawaii 1894–98, and Governor of the Territory of Hawaii 1900–1903, before retiring to private practice.

President Sanford Dole
Hawaii Scott 79

The only Official stamps issued by the Republic were used primarily for mail sent by the Department of Foreign Affairs. They feature the portrait of Lorrin A. Thurston, grandson of missionaries and Minister of the Interior to King Kalakaua. One of the leaders of the 1893 revolution, Thurston represented the Provisional Government in Washington where he worked towards annexation by the United States. The initials “RH” above his portrait stand for “Republic of Hawaii.”

Official
Hawaii Scott O6

Once Hawaii became a territory of the United States, domestic and international mail was franked by U.S. postage stamps. The first U.S. stamps to recognize the territory appeared as the Hawaii Sesquicentennial issue, commemorating the 150th anniversary of Captain James Cook’s arrival in the islands. The stamps were overprints of Scott 634 (2-cent George Washington) and Scott 637 (5-cent Theodore Roosevelt) and read: “Hawaii / 1778–1928.”

Hawaii Susquicentennial
1928 • Scott 647–648

In addition to Hawaii Scott 47, 76, and 82, a fourth stamp depicting the statue of Kamehameha I was issued, this time by the U.S. Postal Department, as part of the U.S. Territorial series, which also included Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. On Kamehameha Day, June 11, the statue is draped with long floral leis.

Kamehameha I
1937 • Scott 799

Hawaii’s most recognized landmark is the symmetrical volcanic crater that rises beyond Waikiki, Oahu. Formed approximately 300,000 years ago in a single titanic blast, Diamond Head has been dormant for at least 150,000 years. It was named by British sailors in the nineteenth century who mistook the glittering but worthless calcite crystals on its slopes for diamonds.

Diamond Head
1952 • Scott C45
Hawaii — The Republic • 1893–1894

- The Coat of Arms
  Hawaii Scott 80
- Port of Honolulu
  Hawaii Scott 75
- Kamehameha
  Hawaii Scott 76

- The Star and Palms
  Hawaii Scott 77
- S.S. Arawa
  Hawaii Scott 78
- President Sanford
  Ballard Dole
  Hawaii Scott 79
- Official
  Hawaii Scott 06

Territory & State Territory • 1898–1959

- Hawaii Susquicentennial
  1928 • Scott 647–648
- Kamehameha I
  1937 • Scott 799
- Diamond Head
  1952 • Scott C45
Hawaii — Statehood • 1959

Hawaii Statehood
1959 • Scott C55
Hawaii's entrance into the Union as the fiftieth state on August 21, 1959 was celebrated with an air mail stamp showing a traditional ali'i (chief) in his feathered cloak, the eight major islands, and a star.

50-Star Flag
1960 • Scott 1153
On July 4, 1960 the 50-Star Flag stamp was issued to mark Hawaii's long awaited statehood. The fifty stars were flown again in 1963 with the Flag Over White House issue.

25th Anniversary of Hawaiian Statehood
1984 • Scott 2080
The 25th anniversary of Hawaiian statehood was marked with a stamp showing an eastern Polynesian double-hulled sailing vessel crossing the ocean, with Mauna Loa, the largest volcano on Earth and one of the most active, on the horizon. Volcanic plumes of smoke by day and the glow of lava by night are theorized to be one of the guides used by ancient Pacific mariners.

50th Anniversary of Hawaiian Statehood
August 21, 2009 • Scott TBD
The 50th anniversary of Hawaiian statehood was celebrated with a stamp created by local historian and artist Herb Kawainui Kane. It depicts a surfer riding a traditional longboard while next to him two people paddle an outrigger canoe.

American Bicentennial Issue • Hawaii
1976 • Scott 1682
The flag of the “Aloha State” incorporates a small version of Great Britain’s Union Jack, symbolic of the days when Hawaiian monarchs had close ties to England. The eight red, white, and blue stripes represent the eight main islands of the archipelago. The 13-cent stamp was issued as part of the State Flags series. A 42-cent stamp featuring the flag and ohi'a lehua flowers was issued in the Flags of Our Nation series.

Hawaii State Bird & Flower
1982 • Scott 1963
The Hawaii stamp in the 1982 State Birds and Flowers series shows a nene goose, listed as one of the most endangered waterfowl species in the world. The beautiful smaller cousin of the Canadian goose is semi-terrestrial, with shortened webs between its toes that allow it to climb over the volcanic rock. The yellow hibiscus (pua aloalo) became the official state flower of Hawaii in 1988, although the hibiscus in any color had been designated as the territorial flower in the early 1920s. The shrub blooms almost continuously, but the individual blossoms last only a day.

25th Anniversary of Hawaiian Statehood
1984 • Scott 2080
The 25th anniversary of Hawaiian statehood was marked with a stamp showing an eastern Polynesian double-hulled sailing vessel crossing the ocean, with Mauna Loa, the largest volcano on Earth and one of the most active, on the horizon. Volcanic plumes of smoke by day and the glow of lava by night are theorized to be one of the guides used by ancient Pacific mariners.

200th Anniversary Captain Cook’s Arrival in Hawaii
1978 • Scott 1732–1733
The Captain Cook issue celebrates the bicentennial of the first visit made by the great British navigator Captain James Cook to the Hawaiian islands on January 20, 1778 and his anchorage in Cook Inlet, Alaska on June 1, 1778. Cook’s voyages changed the map of the Pacific from the Arctic to the Antarctic. The second stamp shows his two ships, the HMS Resolution and the HMS Discovery, as depicted in the etching “A View of Karakekooa in Owyhee” made by the expedition’s artist, John Webber.
**HAWAII — STATEHOOD • 1959**

- Hawaii Statehood 1959 • Scott C55
- 50-Star Flag 1960 • Scott 1153
- 25th Anniversary of Hawaiian Statehood 1984 • Scott 2080
- Hawaii State Bird & Flower 1982 • Scott 1963
- 50th Anniversary of Hawaiian Statehood August 21, 2009 • Scott TBD
- American Bicentennial Issue • Hawaii 1976 • Scott 1682

**HAWAII — HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

- 200th Anniversary Captain Cook’s Arrival in Hawaii 1978 • Scott 1732–1733
Hawaii — Historical Highlights

Hawaiian Missionary Stamps
2002 • Scott 3694
A souvenir sheet replicating the Hawaiian "Missionary Stamps" (Hawaii Scott 1–4), and issued on the 150th anniversary of the original 13-cent stamp, made it possible for everyone to collect a piece of philatelic history.

Japanese Bomb Pearl Harbor
1991 • Scott 2559i
The Pearl Harbor stamp from the World War II issue depicts one of the most horrific moments in American history — the December 7, 1941 Japanese bombing of the U.S. Naval fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, on the island of Oahu, that plunged the United States into World War II. A white monument marks the resting place of the battleship USS Arizona, which sank with the loss of 1,177 sailors. The ship lies just below the surface of the water and is clearly visible beneath the memorial building.
Hawaii — Historical Highlights

The first official Hawaiian post office was established in December 1850. Postmaster Henry M. Whitney had stamps printed locally in three denominations. Philatelists call these rare stamps “Hawaiian Missionaries” because virtually all were used by Christian missionaries on outbound mail. Only 28 covers with Missionary stamps are known to exist; only the Dawson cover (right) bears the 2¢ stamp. The two 13¢ stamps were unusual as they prepaid postage in two countries—Hawaii and the U.S.

Hawaiian Missionary Stamps
2002 • Scott 3694

Japanese Bomb Pearl Harbor
1991 • Scott 2559i
Visiting Hawaii

National Parks Centennial
“City of Refuge”
1972 • Scott C84
The National Parks Centennial was marked with a stamp showing the restored Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau (“City of Refuge”) National Historic Park. A large, carved wooden ki‘i, a symbol of pre-Christian Hawaiian religion, stands in the foreground. Located on the western coast of the Big Island of Hawaii, the site preserves an ancient religious sanctuary where men and women who had broken laws or been defeated in battle could seek refuge. If the transgressor successfully swam to the sacred place, he could receive absolution from the priests and return to his home.

Hawaii • Greetings from America
2002 • Scott 3571
The Greetings from America stamp series features retro designs that mimic the popular tourist postcards of the 1930s and ’40s. The Hawaii stamp offers a panoramic view of Waikiki Beach, its high-rise hotels, and the extinct volcano Diamond Head in the distance, with a blossom of yellow hibiscus, the Hawaii state flower, in the foreground.

Wonders of America • Kilauea
Most Active Volcano
2006 • Scott 4067
Included in the Wonders of America issue is a stamp featuring Kilauea Volcano on the island of Hawaii. One of the world's most active volcanos, Kilauea first erupted some 300,000–600,000 years ago and has been erupting continuously since January 1, 1983. The volcano goddess Pele, “She-Who-Shapes-the-Sacred-Land,” is said to make her home in Halemaumau Crater at the summit of Kilauea.

Endangered Flora
Hawaiian Wild Broadbean
1979 • Scott 1784
The Hawaiian Wild Broadbean, once a thriving species, is now reduced to a handful of plants that may not continue to survive. This relative of the pea, with its curling vine that can reach sixty feet in height and its deep pink flowers, was included in the Endangered Flora issue.

Wildflowers • Ohi’a Lehua
1992 • Scott 2669
Shown in the Wildflowers issue, the Ohi’a lehua tree, with its puffyball blossoms of fiery red, yellow, orange, or white, is considered sacred to the goddess Pele, as it is the first plant to appear in volcanic lava beds. The plant grows throughout the islands in an extreme variety of forms, from a tiny bog plant to a 100-foot upland tree. Flowers from the ohi’a lehua are often used in leis.

Merian Botanical Prints
Flowering Pineapple & Cockroaches
1997 • Scott 3127
The Merian Botanical Prints issue honors the work of Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717) who traveled to the Dutch colony on Surinam (Guiana) on the northeast coast of South America to collect material for her book on plants and their associated insects: Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium (1705). The stamp depicting Flowering Pineapple and Cockroaches is reflective of the lucrative pineapple industry, which began in 1885 when British horticulturalist Capt. John Kidwell imported 1,000 plants from Jamaica. The Hawaiian name for pineapple, Halakahiki, means “foreign fruit.” It is the islands’ second most valuable crop, after sugar cane.

North American Wildlife • Iiwi
1987 • Scott 2311
The North American Wildlife series includes the Hawaiian scarlet honeycreeper, the scarlet and black i‘iwi bird whose long curved beak is used to collect nectar from flowers. Its feathers were used in capes and other symbols of Hawaiian royalty.

Topical Birds • Hawaiian Crested Honeyeater
1998 • Scott 3224
The Tropical Birds series shows the endangered multicolored Hawaiian crested honeyeater, the akohekohe, now found only on the slopes of Haleakala Volcano on the island of Maui.

Endangered Species
Hawaiian Monk Seal
1996 • Scott 3105c
The Endangered Species series depicts an example of a rare and endangered tropical seal, the Hawaiian Monk Seal. Endemic to the Hawaiian islands, its ancient name is iho-holo-i-ka-ua or “dog that runs in rough waters.”
Visiting Hawaii

National Parks Centennial
“City of Refuge”
1972 • Scott C84

Hawaii • Greetings from America
2002 • Scott 3571

Wonders of America
Kilauea • Most Active Volcano
2006 • Scott 4067

Endangered Flora
Hawaiian Wild Broadbean
1979 • Scott 1784

Wildflowers
Oh‘a Lehua
1992 • Scott 2669

Merian Botanical Prints • Flowering Pineapple & Cockroaches
1997 • Scott 3127

Topical Birds
Hawaiian Crested Honeyeater
1998 • Scott 3224

Endangered Species
Hawaiian Monk Seal
1996 • Scott 3105c

North American Wildlife • Iiwi
1987 • Scott 2311
Visiting Hawaii

The Pacific Coral Reef
2004 • Scott 3831 (2004)

Although based on a painting by artist John D. Dawson of a coral reef near the U.S. Territory of Guam, the Pacific Coral Reef sheet of stamps also features many species found in Hawaiian waters.
**Visiting Hawaii**

**Coral Reefs**  
1980 • Scott 1830  
The U.S. Coral Reefs issue includes a stamp showing Hawaiian Finger Coral, so-named for its blunt, finger-like branches. This common coral of Hawaii is found at depths below 15 feet, where it is protected from wave surge. Nearby is a Sabertooth Blenny, a slender-bodied predator with two large canine teeth, whose nickname, False Cleanerfish, reflects its mimicry of a more harmless relative.

**Wonders of the Sea**  
1994 • Scott 2863–2866  
The Wonders of the Sea issue (featuring a diver with coral, diver with sunken ship's wheel, diver with sailing ship, and diver with motorboat) was the inspiration for the first underwater cancellation, off the beach of Waikiki in October 1994. Most of the fish shown on the stamps are tropical species found in the Hawaiian islands.

**Diamond Head Lighthouse**  
2007 • Scott 4146  
The Pacific Lighthouses series features Diamond Head Lighthouse, one of the best-known lighthouses in the Pacific Ocean. Built on the slopes of the extinct Diamond Head volcano near Honolulu, the modern lighthouse was built in 1917 on the foundations of the original structure. Its light can be seen 18 miles out to sea.

**Duke Kahanamoku**  
2002 • Scott 3660  
Duke Paoa Kahanamoku (1899–1968) was arguably Hawaii’s greatest athlete, a swimmer and surfer, winner of six Olympic medals. The stamp shows Kahanamoku and fellow surfers at Waikiki, his home beach.
Visiting Hawaii

Coral Reefs
1980 • Scott 1830

Wonders of the Sea
1994 • Scott 2863–2866

Diamond Head Lighthouse
2007 • Scott 4146

Duke Kahanamoku
2002 • Scott 3660
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