



POSTAL NEWS

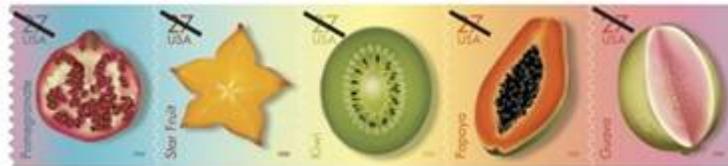
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Tropical Fruit Stamps Issued at WESTPEX Stamp Show *First-Day-of-Issue Dedication Takes Place on Show's Opening Day*



BURLINGAME, CA — They look good enough to eat and will likely whet the appetite of anyone receiving a postcard in the mail. They are the new 27-cent Tropical Fruit definitive stamps dedicated today during opening festivities at the 2008 WESTPEX Stamp Show in Burlingame.

Depicting five mouth-watering tropical fruits in eye-catching color, the stamps were illustrated by Sergio Baradat of Miami Beach, FL, who described them as “luscious.” Baradat’s first project for the Postal Service was the Mambo stamp in the Let’s Dance/Bailemos issuance in 2005.

The five tropical fruits are: guava, kiwi, papaya, pomegranate and star fruit.

One of the most common fruits in the world, the **guava** grows on a variety of tropical shrubs and small trees in the myrtle family. Easily identified by its distinctive fragrance, the guava’s sweet pulp is used in drinks, desserts and other foods. Native to southern Mexico and Central America, the guava long ago spread throughout the tropical regions of the Americas, Asia, and Africa. It is also found on many Pacific Islands where it is considered an invasive plant.

Kiwi, a small oval-shaped, fuzzy-skinned fruit, is brown with juicy, bright-green flesh that is both sweet and acidic. It grows on a hardy and fast-growing vine that requires a long growing season—240 frost-free days. Native to eastern Asia, the first kiwi seeds were brought out of China and taken to New Zealand where the plant became a popular backyard vine. Today, kiwi is grown commercially in New Zealand, California, South Africa, Italy, and Chile.

The **papaya**, a large fruit sometimes weighing several pounds, has sweet, but slightly acidic, flesh with a texture similar to that of an overripe cantaloupe. Generally eaten raw, it is also used for juice and in chutneys and desserts. The papaya, believed to be native to southern Mexico and neighboring Central America, is grown commercially worldwide in tropical and subtropical regions and frequently in

greenhouses to protect it from sudden drops in temperature.

The word **pomegranate** refers not only to the round, softball-sized fruit but to the small tree that produces the fruit, as well. Although its native range extends from the Middle East to the Himalayas, this tree has been cultivated and naturalized over the Mediterranean region of Asia, Africa, and Europe since ancient times. Today pomegranates are grown commercially throughout much of the world, including the United States. The pulp of the pomegranate is dark red and juicy, its flavor sweet and tart.

The **star fruit** is a unique and flavorful fruit that has a mild but slightly sweet flavor. Often eaten out of hand, when sliced, it has a star shape. The origin of this fruit is not known, but it is likely that it is native to Malaysia, Indonesia and southern China. Always domesticated, star fruit has been grown in the American tropics for more than 150 years. Today commercial production occurs in Hawaii and other tropical regions.

The Tropical Fruit stamps go on sale nationwide today in Post Offices, on *usps.com*, and by calling 800-STAMP-24.

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation – 146 million homes and businesses. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services – not tax dollars – to pay for operating expenses. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.

Tropical Fruit Stamps Philatelic Fact Sheet

Philatelic Products

There are three philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 105163, First-Day Cover (set of 5) – 2 stamps of same design \$4.60
- 105193, Keepsake with set of 5, \$10.00
- 786363 First-Day Cover (set of 5) – 2 stamps of same design, \$4.60

How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or by writing to:

Information Fulfillment
Dept 6270
U.S. Postal Service
PO Box 219014
Kansas City MO 64121-9014

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, or at the Postal Store website at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

Tropical Fruit stamps
Postmaster
1630 South Delaware Street
San Mateo CA 94402-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by June 24, 2008.