

2021's Top 10 Astronomy on Stamps

Gene R. Major, Editor *Astrofax*

ATA Astronomy Study Unit

<https://www.astronomystudyunit.net/>

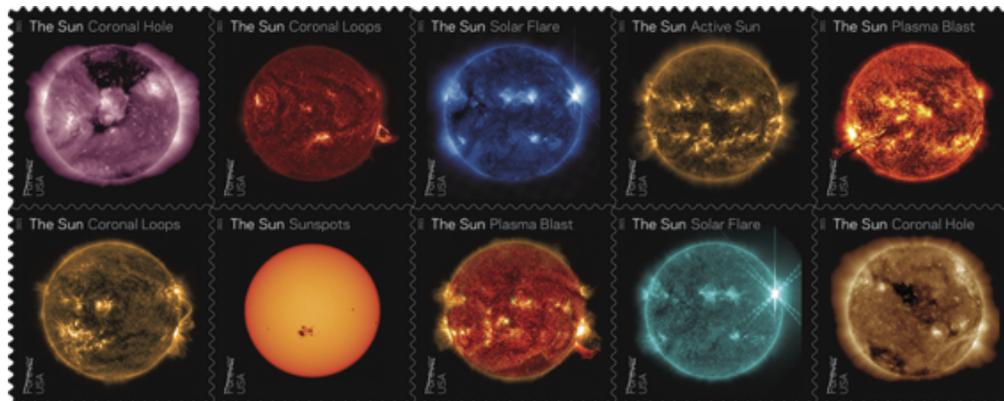
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/astronomystudyunit/>

The end of the calendar year brings a list of past year's top events, accomplishments, and highlights. Several fantastic astronomy-themed stamps were issued in 2021. Here are my top 10.

1. United States: Sun Science

This has got to be one of the most spectacular astronomy issues in recent years. And it's our favorite star: Our Sun.

On June 18, 2021 the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) released a series of stamps celebrating the dynamic nature of our star, the Sun. Each of the 10 "Sun Science" stamps depict a different face of the Sun as imaged by NASA's Solar Dynamics Explorer (SDO) spacecraft. The SDO images on the stamps show coronal loops, coronal holes, plasma bursts, and solar flares in multiple wavelengths of extreme ultraviolet (EUV) light



2. Guernsey: Sark Dark Sky Island

This issue by Guernsey Post is spectacular. Absolutely "stellar" photography.

On June 10, 2021, Guernsey Post released a set of six stamps celebrating the 10th anniversary of the first Dark Sky Island designated by the International Dark Sky Association. The six stamps consist of various spectacular night time views of the dark skies at Sark Island. The six stamps were designed by

Mark Totty and the night sky photography is by Ben Fiore and Sue Daly. Each stamp measures 30-mm x 45-mm.



3. Israel: Observatories of Israel

Accidentally came across this new issue for Israel and had not heard it was being released. Very nice set of stamps commemorating Israel's astronomical observatories.

A new set of postage stamps was issued by Israel on August 24, 2021. The three stamps highlight the observatories of Israel and are part of a series of stamps highlighting education in Israel (from <https://jr.co.il/stamps/index-2021.html>). The stamps show the Wise Observatory, Mitzpe Ramon, the Ramon Crater International Dark Sky Park, and the Givatayim Observatory.

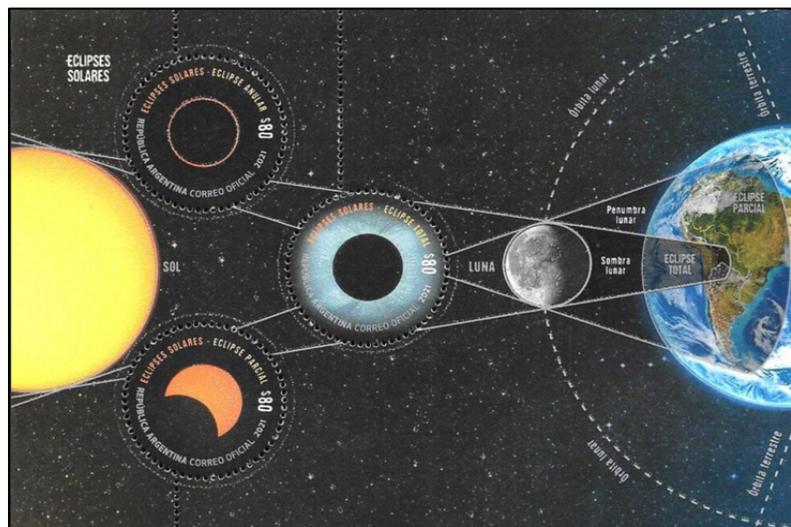
All three stamps are 4.10 Israeli shekels and were designed by David Ben Hardor. The stamps are available as single stamps or a set of three. A minisheet of 9 stamps is also available as well as a First Day Cover from the Israel Post (www.israelpost.co.il)



4. Argentina: Phases of a Solar Eclipse

Argentina released a nice set of round stamps depicting the various stages of a solar eclipse, including an annular eclipse.

The Argentina Postal Service (Correo Argentino), released a minisheet consisting of four stamps depicting the various phases of a solar eclipse on 21 October 2021. The sheet shows a diagram that depicts the configuration of the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth for an eclipse of the Sun. The diagram defines the various eclipse phases as seen from the earth: Partial, Total, and Annular. The sheet measures 150 x 100 mm and each stamp are of a round design (each 29 x 29 mm) showing an Annular Eclipse, a Total Eclipse with corona, and a Partial Eclipse. Each stamp has a value of \$80 Argentine pesos.



5. France: Learning About the Stars

This issue from France came out near the end of the year. They are in a booklet format and illustrate an interesting artistic representation of various aspects of the universe.



On November 11, 2021, France released a set of 12 stamps in a booklet called “Learning About the Stars.” Each of the stamps is an artistic representation of our current knowledge of the universe. The France Postal Service, La Poste, states about this release: *“It makes us travel to the heart of the stars, observe the life and movements of the stars, the far field of galaxies and nebulae.”* The booklet measures 256 x 54mm and each stamp measures 38 x 24mm. There are no face values. The artist is Katy Couprie.

6. South Korea: Astronomy in the Joseon Era

The Joseon Era in South Korea saw revolutionary advancements in astronomical observations. These unique objects are national treasures of South Korea and are a welcome addition to be depicted on stamps.

In celebration of the 54th Science Day on April 21, 2021, Korea Post issued commemorative stamps honoring astronomy in the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897) to reflect Korea’s *“extraordinary astronomical achievements and progress.”* The stamps were designed by Kim Mee-hwa. Each stamp has a denomination of 380 won and each measures 30-mm x 40-mm.

Astronomical instruments to mark the study of time were produced during the reign of King Sejong (1397-1450), under whom astronomy enjoyed its golden age.



The four stamps (from left to right) depict the following instruments: A sundial called the **Angbuilgu**, a rain gauge called **Cheugugi**, an automatic striking clepsydra, called the **Jagyeongnu**, and the **Ilseong-jeongsi-ui** (Sun-and-Stars Time-Determining Instrument).

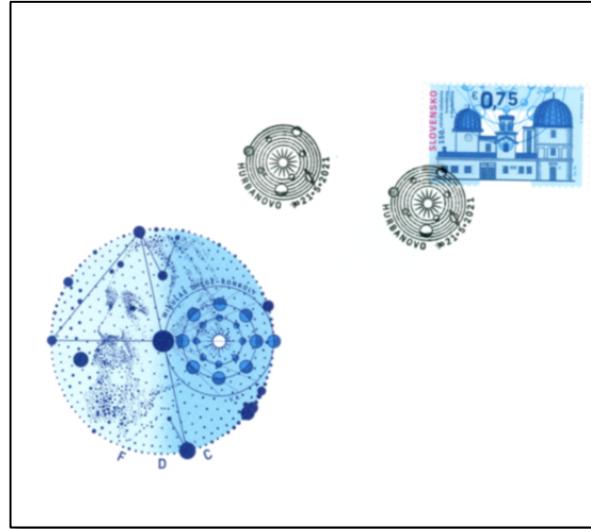
The four Joseon instruments depicted on the stamps are examples of the Joseon Dynasty's desire to develop its own calendrical astronomy and weather observations by applying astronomical knowledge from China.

7. Slovakia: 150th Anniversary of the Hurbanovo Observatory

One of the interesting aspects of collecting astronomy on stamps is that sometimes you hear about relatively obscure observatories that made (and continue to make) important contributions to astronomy and astrophysics. One of these is the Hurbanovo Observatory in Slovakia.

On May 21, 2021, Slovakia Post released a stamp, cover and cancellation to honor the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Hurbanovo Observatory. The observatory is considered to be the cradle of astronomy in Hungary (originally Northern Hungary, known as Ógyalla in Hungarian at the time) and later Czechoslovakia (now in Slovakia). It was established in 1871 by Dr. Miklós Konkoly-Thege. The observatory at Hurbanovo also serves as a meteorological and geomagnetic observatory.

The stamp was designed by Vladislav Rostoka and measures 44.1 x 26.5 mm. The face value is 0.75€ (no Scott number yet). A first day cover and minisheet were also released.



8. Ukraine: 250th Anniversary of the Ivan Franko Astronomical Observatory at Lviv

Another observatory commemorated this year is the Ivan Franko Observatory in Lviv, Ukraine. It has an interesting history and is still very active in astronomical research.

On 14 September 2021, the Ukraine National Post (Ukrposhta) issued a stamp to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the Ivan Franko Astronomical Observatory in Lviv, Ukraine. The stamp was designed by I. Medvedovska and measures 46.5 x 28 mm. There is no face value. The stamp shows two observatory domes in the background, a telescope in the foreground and an armillary sphere. The moon behind some clouds is shown above the observatories. The Ivan Franko Observatory was founded in 1771 by the Jesuit college and is the 17th oldest observatory in Europe. The Observatory was restored in 1900 and in 1912. Operations ceased during World War II and the Observatory was reopened in 1945. Research includes observational and theoretical studies in cosmology, relativistic astrophysics, and stellar astrophysics. The Observatory is now part of Lviv University.



9. Germany: 50th Anniversary of the Effelsberg Radio Telescope

Germany has commemorated the Effelsberg Radio Telescope before on a stamp (1976) and this year's issue commemorates the 50th anniversary of this workhorse of radio astronomy. With the loss of Arecibo, these radio telescopes take on more of the work.

The 100-meter radio telescope, operated by the Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy (MPIfR) in Bonn, Germany celebrated its 50th birthday in 2021. A special postage stamp "50 Jahre 100m-Radioteleskop Effelsberg" and cancellation, "50 Years of the Effelsberg Radio Telescope" was issued on April 1, 2021.



10. São Tomé E Príncipe: Kepler 450th Anniversary

The year 2021 marked the 450th anniversary of the birth of Johannes Kepler (b. 1571). Several countries have issued commemorative stamps. Sao Tome E Principe was one of the more attractive.

The São Tomé E Príncipe postal service (St. Thomas) issued two souvenir sheets on 30 August 2021 commemorating the event. One of the sheets consists of four stamps with a value of 31.00 dobra (Db) each showing Kepler and the solar system, Kepler and his instruments, Kepler working in his laboratory, and Kepler discussing his observations. The second sheet depicts Kepler and one stamp at 124.00 Db showing Kepler in front of a portrait of Tycho Brahe, whom he assisted in 1599.

