

Island Communities: Reunion

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The Indian Ocean island of Réunion is now an overseas Region of France, and as such, it is also part of the European Union and of the Eurozone.

The island has an area of 970 square miles and a population of around 840,000.



1943 300th anniversary of French settlement (Vichy issue), Sc. 177B

Prior to the arrival of the Portuguese around 1507, who named it Santa Apolónia, it appears that the island was uninhabited by men, although it was known to Arab traders. The Portuguese also left it uninhabited, but around 1638-42, the French arrived and claimed the island for France, and in 1649, they named the island Ile Bourbon after the French royal house.

French colonization started from 1665 by the French East India Company. The French renamed the island Réunion in 1793 after the fall of the House of Bourbon. The name commemorated the union of revolutionaries from Marseille and Paris on August 10, 1792. For a brief period 1801-15, it was named Ile Bonaparte after Napoleon, then it reverted to its Ile Bourbon name 1815-48, when it once again became Réunion.

During WWII, the island adhered to the Vichy Regime until November 30, 1942, when Free French Forces took over the island.



1965 300th anniversary of settlement of Réunion, inscribed CFA (Sc. 356)



Left, Vichy 1941 Defence of Empire (Sc. B12); right, Vichy 1942 Child welfare semi-postal air stamp (Sc. CB3)



France 1977 for Réunion region (Sc. 1507)

The island changed from a colony to a French overseas département March 19, 1946, and also became a Region from 1974.

On January 16, 1852, Réunion issued its first two locally printed stamps, intended for use on inland correspondence and for mail to Mauritius. These two stamps were



1852, Sc. 1



1852, Sc. 2

March 1852 until 1859, when the general issues for the French Colonies were introduced.

invalidated in May 1863.

For all other correspondence, unoverprinted stamps of France were used from



France 1 Franc carmine tied by band of square dots cancel on a letter from St. Denis Reunion with c.d.s. of St. Denis dated 2 Oct 54 on the reverse. Addressed to Paris, via Suez.

In December 1859, the post-office in Saint-Denis overprinted the latter stamps with new values and the letter "R".



Left to right: French stamp used in Saint-Denis 1886, with "5c / R" overprint; 1885 R overprint and surcharge on French Colonies issue, Sc. 3; 1885 R overprint and surcharge on French Colonies issue, Sc. 7

In 1891, French Colonial stamps were overprinted "REUNION". In 1892, stamps in the colonial 'Peace and Commerce' design, inscribed RÉUNION, were issued.



Left to right: 1891 Reunion overprint and surcharge, Sc. 31; 1891 Reunion overprint, Sc. 27; 1892-05 Peace and Commerce inscribed Reunion, Sc. 37,39

Pictorial definitives were issued 1907, with designs featuring a map of the island, a view of Saint-Denis or a view of St. Pierre and the Dolomieu volcano crater. These were re-issued 1922-25 with new values and colors, and during 1928-30, again in new colors. In between,



Left: 1907-30 definitive, Sc. 60; upper right: 1907-30 definitive, Sc. 98; right: 1915 semi-postal, Sc. B2

numerous provisional surcharges on previous issues appeared.



1931 Colonial Exhibition (Sc. 124)

1933-40, now with designs showing the cascade in Salazie, the Anchain Peak, also in Salazie, and the Léon Dierx Museum in Saint-Denis. New values and colors were added 1938-40, and in 1944, the French Vichy regime re-issued two of the values without the RF monogram, but these were never put on sale on Réunion.



Left: 1933-40 definitive, here Waterfowl Lake and Anchain Peak (Sc. 148); right, Vichy 1944 as 1933-40 issue, but without RF monogram (Sc. 237B)

Réunion's first commemorative issue appeared 1931, for the Colonial Exhibition in Paris.

A completely new pictorial definitive issue appeared



1933-40 definitive Cascade of Salazie, Sc. 127



During 1937-38, Réunion participated in the French colonial omnibus issues for the international exhibition in Paris, the Pierre and Marie Curie semi-postal, the New York International Fair and the 130th anniversary of the French Revolution.



Left: 1938 Curie semi-postal (Sc. B4); upper right: 1937 Paris International Exposition (Sc. 158); right: 1937 air post stamp for flight of 'Roland Garros' from Reunion to France (Sc. C1)



Left: 1938 air post stamp (Sc. C4); right: Vichy 1942 air post stamp without RF monogram (Sc. C13)



An air post issue appeared 1938, which was also re-issued without the RF monogram by the Vichy authorities 1942.



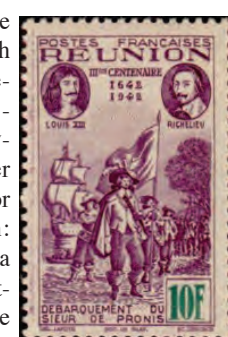
Vichy 1941 Marshall Petain and Saint-Denis (Sc. 176)



Vichy 1943 300th anniversary of French settlement, air post (Sc. C13F)

a view of Saint-Denis harbor. In 1942 six ordinary and six air post stamps commemorated the 300th anniversary of French rule over the island; also in 1942, two semi-postals in aid of children and one for the imperial week were issued. None of the Vichy issues were ever put on sale on Réunion.

The French Vichy regime issued several other stamps for Réunion: in 1941 a semi-postal set for the defence of the French colonial empire and a set of two featuring a portrait of Marshall



Vichy 1943 300th anniversary of French settlement (Sc. 177G)



Vichy 1942 Colonial education fund (Sc. CB4)



Left to right: 1943 France Libre overprints (Sc. 200, 211, C16)



In 1943, a number of previous issues were overprinted "France Libre" by the Free French authorities now in charge on the island. London-printed postage and air post stamps were put on sale during late 1943 and early 1944. The London-printed issues of Réunion also included a 1944 semi-postal for the Mutual Aid and Red Cross Funds.



1944 Red Cross and national relief semi-postal (Sc. B15)



Left: 1943 France Libre issue (Sc. 237);
right: 1944 Free French air post stamp (Sc. C24)

In 1945, several of the Free French issues were surcharged with new values, and Réunion also participated in the omnibus issue honoring Governor-General Eboué, and in 1946 in the Victory issue and the air post issue entitled "From Chad to Rhine".



Left to right: 1945 surcharges on France Libre issue (Sc. 246); 1945 Eboué issue (Sc. 238); 1945 Victory air post stamp (Sc. C25)



Left to right: 1947 definitives, Sc. 251 and cutting of sugar cane, Sc. 254; 1947 air post stamp (Sc. C34)

Réunion's last issue was a 1947 pictorial definitive issue, as well as an associated air post issue.

Then, from 1949 onwards, distinct stamps for the French overseas départements ceased, but due to the fact that Réunion used a different currency from metropolitan France, French stamps surcharged with values in CFA Francs were issued for use on Réunion until the end of 1974. During this period, a few stamps with special relevance to Réunion were issued with the CFA denominations incorporated into the stamp design.

This concerns the 1965 single for the 300th anniversary of the French colonization of Réunion, the 1971 single depicting the Réunion Chameleon and also the 1971 set commemorating General de Gaulle, as well as the 1972



Left: 1961 CFA overprint on France Sower issue (Réunion Sc. 341); right: 1964 CFA overprint on stamp showing city arms of Saint-Denis (capital of Réunion) (Sc. 351)

single for the bicentenary of the discovery of the Crozet Islands and of Kerguelen Island.



1971 de Gaulle commemoration, inscribed CFA (Sc. 380a); 1971 Réunion Chameleon, inscribed CFA (Sc. 376); 1968 Reunion CFA overprint (Sc. 366) for 20th anniversary of French Polar Expeditions; 1972 200th anniversary of discovery of Crozet and Kerguelen islands, inscribed CFA (Sc. 382)



Left: France 1960 showing Cilaos Church, Réunion (Sc. 949); above right, France 1996 for 50th anniversary of creation of overseas départements (Sc. 2547); right: France 1998, Sc. 2636



From January 1, 1975, Réunion has used ordinary French stamps. There have been a few French



stamps with motifs relating to Réunion, both before and after this date, including a 1960 stamp featuring the Cilaos Church, a 1977 stamp devoted to the Réunion Region, a 1996 stamp for the 50th anniversary of the creation of the overseas départements, a 1998 single devoted to the cultural heritage of Réunion, and both in 2003 and 2007, animals



native to Réunion were included in souvenir sheets showing animal life in the overseas territories. 2011 was the year of the French overseas territories, and a prestige booklet contained one stamp showing the annual festival on Réunion commemorating

Top left: France 2003 Terpsiphone/Virgin Bird, cropped from souvenir sheet showing birds of the overseas territories (Sc. 2939); left: France 2007 Barau's Petrel, cropped from S/S showing endangered species of the overseas territories (Sc. 3315);

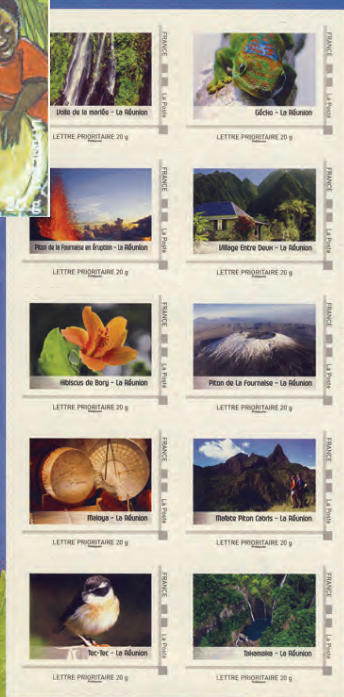


Above: France 2011 – Festivals and traditions of the regions, prestige booklet with self-adhesive stamps, including this relating to Réunion: Abolition of slavery (1848, celebrated each year on December 20)

Top right: France 2011 sheet of self-adhesive personalized stamps (issued by the French Post) showing scenery etc. of the Réunion National Park

France 2012 sheet of self-adhesive personalized stamps (issued by the French Post) – Réunion Grand Raid (running competition) 2012

France 2010 booklet with personalized stamps showing motifs from Réunion



the abolition of slavery, and there was also a self-adhesive booklet with scenery from each of twelve overseas territories of France.

In addition, the French Post issues a number of booklets and self-adhesive sheets containing so-called personalized stamps, and several of these have been dedicated to Réunion. The same goes for the previously so popular PAP—pre-stamped envelopes.

Réunion also issued several postage-due stamps from 1889 onwards, including French postage-due stamps surcharged in CFA currency, and special parcel post receipt stamps were also issued 1896-1923.



Réunion issued postal cards from 1892 until 1923, and letter-cards and pre-stamped envelopes, also from 1892. In 1960 and 1971, French aerogrammes were issued with CFA surcharges for use on Réunion, and in recent years, pre-stamped envelopes have been issued specifically for sale on Réunion (albeit valid for postage throughout France).



France 2006 pre-stamped envelopes with motif from Réunion, and only sold at post-office on the island (stamp imprint is a modified version of France Sc. 2636 showing the office of the under-prefecture at Saint-Pierre, Réunion, issued 1998)