

Landlocked Countries: Hungary, Part 1

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Britannica map showing 1914 Austria-Hungary Empire (light orange), and the nations in and around that empire today.

Hungary has for long periods had access to the Adriatic Sea thru what is now Croatia. When postage stamps were introduced in Hungary, it was part of the Austrian Empire and used the general stamp issues of Austria.

In 1867, Hungary was granted a separate constitution, and the Dual Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was born with the Austrian Emperor as King of Hungary. The two parts now had separate governments but with a few common ministries (defense, foreign relations).



A separate Hungarian post was introduced in 1867, and the same year, a joint, interim stamp issue was issued for use by both the Austrian and the Hungarian posts. Therefore, these stamps had no inscription except for the currency abbreviation Kr. (for Kreuzer/Krjczár). The stamps featured a portrait of emperor/king Francis Joseph I.

1867 Austria Sc. 29, joint issue for the Austrian and Hungarian Posts

The 150th anniversary of this stamp issue was celebrated on four 2017 stamps and a souvenir sheet of two, the latter was a joint issue with Austria.

These stamps were in use in Hungary until separate stamps were issued 1871 for Hungary and the autonomous kingdom of Croatia-Slovenia that was attached to the Kingdom of Hungary 1868 and was served by the Hungarian Post. So, Hungary now had direct access to the Adriatic Sea.

1871 Sc. 1, no country name, only King portrait and national arms



2017 150 anniversary 1867 issue



This situation lasted till the end of WWI, when the different nationalities established their own national states carved out of the Dual Kingdom and both Austria and Hungary became landlocked.

In 2021 the 150th anniversary of the 1871 stamps was commemorated with two stamps reproducing two of the stamps.



2021 150 anniversary 1871 issue

Hungary as a coastal country 1868-1918

A definitive stamp issue for Hungary was issued between 1871 and 1873. They had a portrait of King Francis Joseph and beneath it the arms of Hungary, but no country name. The first printing of these stamps in May turned out to be unsatisfactory and a new and improved printing was made in June.

A new design showing the Hungarian Stephen Crown above an envelope and the inscription MAGYAR KIR.(ALYI) POSTA (Royal Hungarian Post) was first issued in 1874.



Left to right, 1874 Sc. 17 (separate files), St. Stephen's Crown above letter, colored values; 1888 Sc. 33, St. Stephen's Crown above letter, black values; 1898 Sc. 39, watermarked paper (Crown in oval)

This design was in use until the introduction of a new currency in 1900, the Korona divided into 100 Filler, but with different watermarks and minor changes in the design and shift from engraving to letterpress printing.

With the introduction of the Korona, new stamp designs were introduced in 1900. The lower values featured the mythical Turul bird, the middle values a portrait of King Francis Joseph wearing the Stephen Crown, and the top values displayed the Hungarian state arms. This design was also printed with different watermarks and differing perforation gauges until 1916.



1900 Sc. 49 (Turul bird), Sc. 63 (King Franz Josef I)

The designs were also used for semi-postal stamps with an additional label beneath the design. This was first done in 1913 for flood victims.



Clockwise from upper left: 1913 Sc. B1, Flood victims; 1914 Sc. B32 War widows and orphans; 1915 Sc. B38 and B49, War widows and orphans

These were overprinted for war widows and orphans in 1914, and in 1915, stamps without labels were converted into semi-postal stamps also for war widows and orphans

Semi-postal stamps featuring war scenes were issued 1916-17 for war charity, and in 1917-18, two 1916 stamps featuring harvesters were converted to semi-postal stamps for the war charity exhibition.



Top row, 1916 Sc. B53-55 war charity
Bottom row, 1917 Sc. B56-57 war charity

In 1916 new definitive stamps showing harvesters on the lower values and the Parliament building in Budapest on the higher values were issued.

King Francis Joseph died in November 1916 and King Charles IV took over. In December 1916 two stamps, one showing Queen Zita and the other King Charles, were issued to celebrate their crowning.

Definitive stamps with the portrait of King Charles on the lower values and of Queen Zita on the two highest values were issued in August 1918 (see next column).



1916 harvesters and Parliament Sc. 109, 110



1916 Sc. 104-05 Coronation of King Charles IV and Queen Zita



Left to right: 1918 Sc. 130-131 King Charles IV & Queen Zita; 1918 Sc. 171 Republic overprint

King Charles withdrew on November 13, 1918, and on November 18, the National Council proclaimed the Hungarian People's Republic and King Charles stamps were overprinted "KOZTARSASAG" (Republic). The 1916 definitive (Harvesters and Parliament) was re-issued in 1919 with the "Kir." removed from the country panel of the stamps to simply say "MAGYAR POSTA".



Left, 1918 Sc. 157 Republic overprint; right, 1919 Sc. 178 harvesters with Kir. Removed POSTA".