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Lunar New Year – Year of the Rabbit



On Jan. 22, the U.S. Postal Service will issue the fourth of twelve stamps in its Celebrating Lunar New Year series, which began in 2008 with the Year of the Rat. The Year of the Rabbit begins on Feb. 3, 2011, and ends on Jan. 22, 2012.

The Lunar New Year is celebrated primarily by people of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tibetan, and Mongolian heritage in many parts of the world. In the United States as elsewhere, the occasion is marked in various ways across a diverse array of cultures. Parades, parties, and other special events are common.

Kumquats, such as those depicted in the stamp art, are given as gifts and eaten for luck at this time of renewed hope for the future.

Famous people born in the Year of the Rabbit include film director Francis Ford Coppola, athlete Michael Jordan, and actress Drew Barrymore.

Art director Ethel Kessler worked on the series with illustrator Kam Mak, an artist who grew up in New York City's Chinatown and now lives in Brooklyn. The illustration was originally created using oil paints on panel.

Kessler's design also incorporates elements from the previous series of Lunar New Year stamps, using Clarence Lee's intricate paper-cut design of a rabbit and the Chinese character—drawn in grass-style calligraphy by Lau Bun—for "Rabbit."