

BREAK FREE  
Investing in Stamps for Fun and Profit

The *UNCONVENTIONAL* Guide to  
**MAKING MONEY**  
*with Little Pieces of Paper*



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# Introduction

These are dangerous times.

Inequality is on the rise — surpassing that found during the Gilded Age.

Which, unsurprisingly, means populism is on the march. When insecurity spreads, anger and scapegoating soon follow.

Classical liberalism — not the modern-day political kind, but the theory of government that brought us republics, democracies and capitalism — is being questioned in a way unseen since the Second World War.

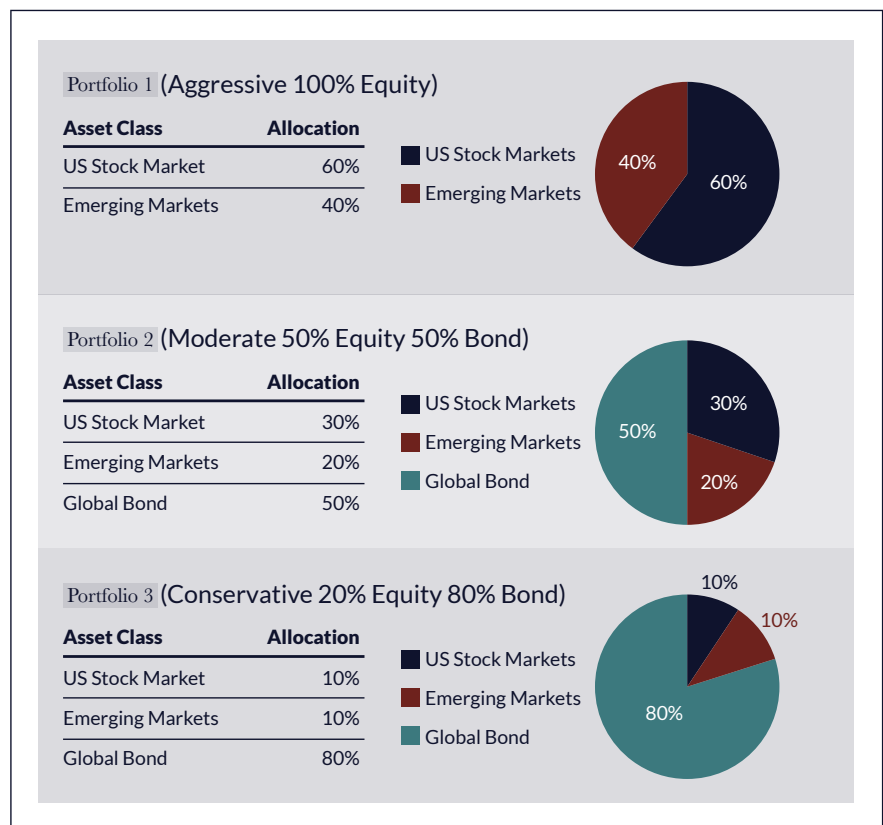
We're not here to cast any judgments on the politics of the current age. These days, it feels like everyone thinks that's their job — great. Let 'em pontificate. We're steering clear.

However, *Unconventional Wealth* is here to protect your money.

And with this much uncertainty in the world — so many dangerous turns events can take today — that protection is needed now more than ever.

That's why we've written this report — and many others like it.

You see — during uncertain times — you need to spread your wealth between a variety of different investments.



*Many financial advisors will tell you to put most — if not all — of your money into stocks and bonds. A great way to lose some (or all) of your money at once.*

Yet most people have way too much money in stocks.

That's true even during the best of times.

A lot of financial advisers will tell you to put something like 50–100% of your money in stocks.

Coincidentally, the same asset classes they get paid to sell you.

And when they're not selling you stocks, they're selling you the remainder in bonds.

These days, bond interest rates don't even keep up with our very low inflation — let alone make you money.

And putting most — or all — of your portfolio into stocks is a great way to lose most — or all — of your money all at once.

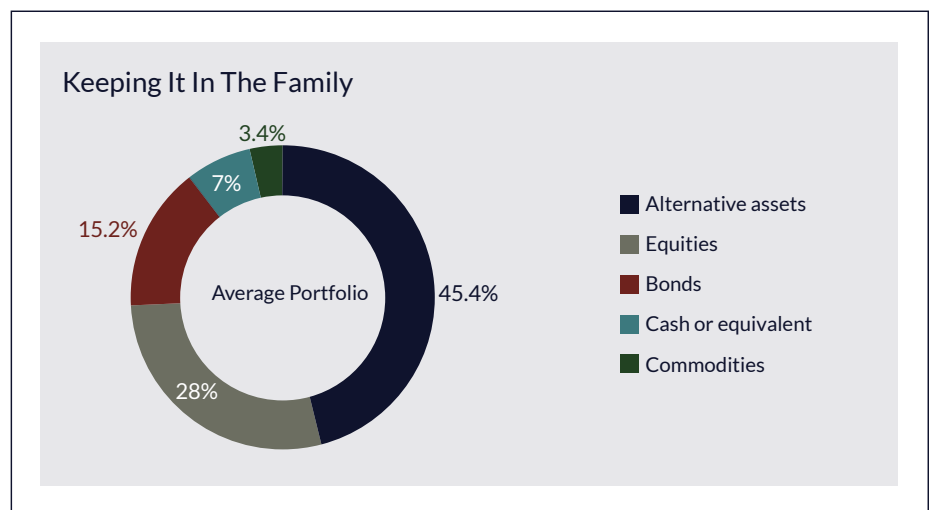
If you lived through the dot-com crash or the 2008 financial crisis, you don't need me to tell you this. You know it. When stocks go south, it doesn't matter if you're invested in the U.S., Europe, China or Timbuktu.

Your wealth is taking a massive haircut.

U.S. stocks have been in a bull market for a solid decade. That can't continue indefinitely. Who knows when it will turn, but one thing's for sure — the stock market is not a one-way bet.

That's why the “average” portfolio isn't how the very wealthy invest — not even close.

You'll see that the average family office — the vehicle most wealthy families use to invest their money — has less than 30% put into stocks.



*The average family office has a 45.4% exposure to alternatives assets.*

The rest is in a whole host of other instruments.

But the real bread and butter — where the uber-wealthy put the lion's share of their money — is “alternative assets.”

Sitting at over 45% of the average multimillion-dollar portfolio.

## That's Where We Come In

“Alternative assets” in this case means unconventional stores of wealth that the average investor rarely thinks about, if he's even heard of them as investments.

It means things like investing in [fine art](#).

It means stashing some cash into rare, tangible assets like coins.

And of course, it means putting some of your money into proven strategies, like rare, investment-grade stamps.

That's what this report is all about.

With what you are reading right now, you're going to see how rare stamps have made up the backbone of some of the greatest fortunes around today — including that of the British royal family.

You'll see why stamps are one of the few investments that can both act as a protective store of wealth... yet also, happily, stamps boast growth that rivals or beats the best of the stock market.

You're going to learn how stamps went from a collector's item for hobbyists and grew into one of the most stable, desirable asset classes in the world today.

You're going to become expert in the grading of stamps — so you can figure out which ones are worth your time and money and which ones you want to avoid at all costs.

You'll learn how to organize and build your collection — depending on what your goals are.

And finally, we'll introduce you to the easiest, fastest way to get your own stamp portfolio started today — for a lot less than you'd think, thanks to a special relationship we built just for that purpose.

Let's be clear — rare stamps, like many of the other tangible assets we cover, are one of the best ways to protect your wealth from the uncertainties of the times and of the markets.

But they're also one of the most lucrative opportunities out there — with returns that rival the best that stocks can do, while carrying a lot less downside.

This isn't for day trading. You don't want to jump in and out of positions the way brokers encourage you to do with stocks (so they can get their commission every time).

These are real assets you'll want to hold for years.

They are foundational. They are the bedrock of your family's wealth. They can create a legacy of riches to sustain your name for generations.

That's why we're so excited to bring this information to you — when so few others will.

Let's get started.



Ryan Cole  
Editor-in-chief, *Unconventional Wealth*



# Long Live the Queen's Collection

Queen Elizabeth's most valuable asset is not the Crown Jewels or Buckingham Palace. It is a "secret" asset worth hundreds of millions — or more — even though it's unknown to most investors.

This rare asset isn't gold or silver. It's not copper, platinum or diamonds, either. In fact, it's not any kind of precious metal or jewel at all.

But it has gone up in value every year since the 1950s. At an average of over 10% per year.

The past decade, it's gone up over 13% annually. During the 2008 financial crisis, it actually rose in value while the market was crumbling.

This asset isn't tied to any stocks or bonds, either. Making it the perfect hedge against market fluctuations, economic crashes and investment bubbles.

And while normally the queen's possessions are the property of the state, this asset is privately held. Its worth is far too valuable to be shared.

So what is it?

The queen's secret asset is her collection of rare stamps, started by her grandfather, King George V.

No surprise for you — just look at the title of this report.

But what may be surprising is how — unlike most of the queen's possessions — this one is just as accessible to us commoners, as well.

Indeed — you don't need to be royalty to take advantage of the value of stamps. To enjoy the security that comes with owning a stable, physical asset that doesn't depreciate in value — and that has been trouncing the markets for decades.



*Queen Elizabeth II is the longest reigning monarch in British history.*

For instance, look at the experience of Bryan Gould.

In the late '90s, Bryan was fed up with stocks.

Like a lot of us, the 63-year-old Californian was tired of the market's stomach-churning roller coaster ride. What's more, he feared the stock market was bubbly and near a top (how right he was).

He knew there had to be another way to make steady gains... without all the ups and downs.

That's when he discovered that stamps aren't just for hobbyists — they make incredible investments as well.

Despite over 30 successful years in the investing business, Bryan had never heard of this unique alternative to stocks — not as an investment, anyway. He thought stamps were just for collectors.

But as he investigated further, he was amazed how well stamps performed.

## Double-Digit Returns for Decades

You've already seen that stamps have been returning great value for decades.

The way that's usually measured, by the way, is with indexes invented by Stanley Gibbons, one of the world's largest and oldest traders in stamps.

One looks at the worth of the 250 rarest stamps from Great Britain (the GB250 index) while another looks at the 30 rarest (the GB30 index). Think of them as the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones industrial average of the stamp investing world.

Stanley Gibbons uses Great Britain because that's where modern glue stamps — and stamp collecting and stamp investing — were born. British stamps have the longest history of being bought, traded and used as a vehicle of wealth.

So most investors don't look further than the two Great Britain stamp indexes.

Which is why few know how successful *all* stamps have been since asset hounds started studying them.

If anything, the GB30 and 250 are probably underselling the performance of stamps.



To give one example — with the rise of China’s economy, Chinese stamps have been booming. And a newer index finds that the 200 rarest Chinese stamps have increased in value well over 11% per year, looking back 23 years (as far back as records go, thanks to the echoes of Chairman Mao’s Cultural Revolution).

Indeed, Bryan found that — no matter how you sliced or diced the stamp universe — rare, investment-grade stamps were a huge winner.

Almost never falling below a 5% gain in any year. Almost always averaging well into the double digits.

What’s more, this is an asset that performs best in times of high inflation.

The last time the world experienced high inflation in the late 1970s, the GB30 index delivered nearly 600% growth in a five-year period.

Even while the stock market crashed twice in a nine-year period, Bryan’s collection gained over 264%.

Bryan found that stamps are that rarest of assets — a safe store of wealth. Insulated from the markets. And with returns that equal or beat stocks, despite having close to zero risk.

So Bryan took a chance and moved a portion of his money into stamps.

Boy, was he happy he did...

Even while the stock market crashed twice in a nine-year period, Bryan’s collection gained over 264%.

A small \$5,000 investment into the same account as Bryan would’ve returned \$13,200... \$25,000 would’ve netted \$66,000 in profits.

And that’s during nine of the most tumultuous years in stock market history — including the tech bubble bursting and the subprime crisis crash.

While his friends were losing their shirts, Bryan’s wealth was increasing exponentially.

He’s not the only one.

## From Mechanic to Stamp Riches

Nathaniel Soderberg was fed up when he started putting a relatively small amount of his modest savings into a stamp portfolio.

The 47-year-old English mechanic didn't trust the stock market anymore. He wanted a place where he could stash his money and count on it to go up.

He wasn't looking to strike it rich; he just wanted to sleep easier at night knowing his retirement was squared away.

Nathaniel is happy to report his portfolio has returned between "8% and 12 every year."

**Over two recent years, his collection shot up 133%.**

"Not bad when you see what interest rates are like at the moment and how the stock market has performed," Nathaniel said.

"I see [it] as a pension, to be quite honest."

While we can find plenty of average folks who have done extremely well with stamps, the list of investors is dominated by big names.

Bill Gross, the billionaire "Bond King," made four times his money when he auctioned off part of his collection for charity.

He called it the best investment he ever made — "better than the markets."

John Lennon and Queen frontman Freddie Mercury both collected stamps. Today, you can even view Lennon's boyhood stamp collection at the National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.



*Lennon's childhood stamp collection on display in Washington D.C.*

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy is an avid stamp collector and investor.

And Maria Sharapova collects stamps from every country she visits — already planning to hand her collection over to her children as a store of wealth, and of pride.

Heck — even Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood is in on the action.

Stamps may have a fusty reputation. But it's undeserved — when rock 'n' roll icons are collectors, it can't be that unhip.

However, luckily enough, that undeserved reputation has helped keep stamps away from the masses — and kept the best investment opportunities open to us.

# The Difference Between a Hobby and an Investment

Before we go further we really should define what we mean by investment-grade stamps.

After all, stamps are everywhere — and will likely remain so for years to come, despite the rise of email and other electronic means of communication.

But you can't just go to the post office, buy a book of stamps, stick them in a drawer for 20 years and call it a day. Investment-grade stamps don't work that way.

If you're a hobbyist — a collector, unconcerned with returns — you can buy stamps willy-nilly. Many collectors have thousands or tens of thousands of stamps — with most of those stamps being absolutely worthless, or close to.

Collectors tend to have an area of focus — either a geographical area, or a time period, or a theme, like stamps with images of flowers.

And the collector wants to get all possible stamps in their preferred area (or areas). The cost or value of the stamps is irrelevant — all that really matters is completing the set.

Sometimes, that's extremely easy — after all, most stamps are produced in the millions. There's a lot of mail in the world — an increasing amount, actually, thanks to our order-online world.



*The Magenta British Guiana 1c stamp — the most valuable stamp in the world.*

## The Birth of Stamp Investing

However, sometimes it's very difficult to complete a set — when there are some stamps that are hard to find. Stamps with very few made, for one reason or another — or error stamps, when none should have been made at all.

That, incidentally, is the genesis of investment-grade stamps.

Almost as soon as stamps went into mass production — in 1840, in England, with the first modern glue stamp, the Penny Black — there have been collectors.

As long as there have been collectors trying to complete their sets, rare stamps have gone up in value.

Indeed, the most valuable stamp of all time is ugly, in poor condition and looks to have had all four corners snipped off for some reason — but it's the only one of its kind.

More on that in a later section on how to assess stamps — for now, the important thing to note is rarity equals value.

And it didn't take long for that value to move from the collecting world into the broader investment world.

In fact, one of the first articles about stamps as rare, investible assets came out in 1903 — just over 60 years from the invention of the first one!

But it's important to highlight the difference between rare stamps and all the rest.

Collectors may own tens of thousands of stamps — but investors might only own a handful.

You don't need many — you can have a strong portfolio with only four or five rare stamps.

In fact, it's hard to have more — because investment-grade stamps are so rare! They make up fewer than 0.01% of all stamps out there.

But it's that small percentage that we're interested in. Because those are the stamps that we've seen rise in value, consistently, over time. And it's these stamps that will make up the bedrock of any investor's portfolio.



*The Penny Black, thanks to its historical significance as the first modern stamp, is one of the few stamps that are plentiful and are still worth a decent amount — even for average examples.*

# Why Invest in Stamps?

You already know that stamps are one of the best stores of wealth in the world — and that they also gain value as fast as anything else out there.

That should be enough to get you interested — and to put some of your own investment portfolio into rare, investment-grade stamps.

But I know from experience some people are still hesitant. After all, stamps are a relatively exotic investment vehicle. And without a strong base of knowledge, it can be difficult to identify the right stamps to invest in.

So why stamps? Simple — they do a lot of other wonderful things for your portfolio:



**Diversification.** As we all know, you don't want all your money in sectors that perform similarly. Especially in down markets, it's important to spread your wealth across many different assets — so not everything will go down at once



**Correlation.** While global economies and stocks of all sorts are becoming more in sync all the time — as I'll show shortly — the value of stamps simply has nothing to do with anything else. Stamp value is driven principally by passionate collectors chasing a scarce number of stamps for their collections. Not oil prices, not bank runs, not bulls or bears or anything else. When diversifying your wealth, holding uncorrelated assets is a major plus



**Stability.** Unique to just a few asset classes, stamps simply don't lose their value. Again, the prices of gold and oil may fluctuate. Rare stamps, on the other hand, haven't lost value any year out of the last 60. Stamps hold their value, or go up. It's that simple.

Given these advantages, it's a wonder more people haven't jumped on the bandwagon.

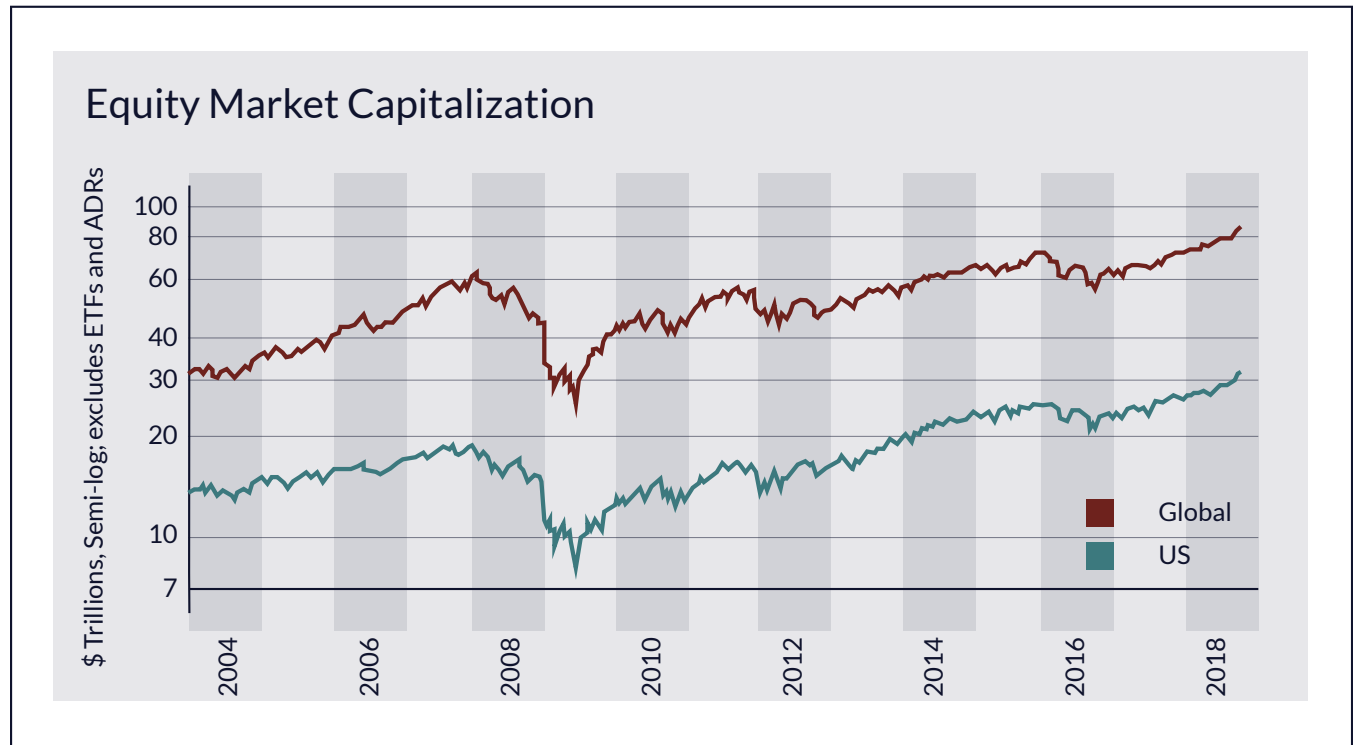
But very few think of stamps as an asset — they still are viewed as a hobby. Even today, nine out of every 10 transactions are between hobbyists, not investors.

That should change in the years ahead. And here's one reason why.



## The World Economy Is More Linked Than Ever

It used to be you could diversify by owning stock in different countries. That's no longer the case.



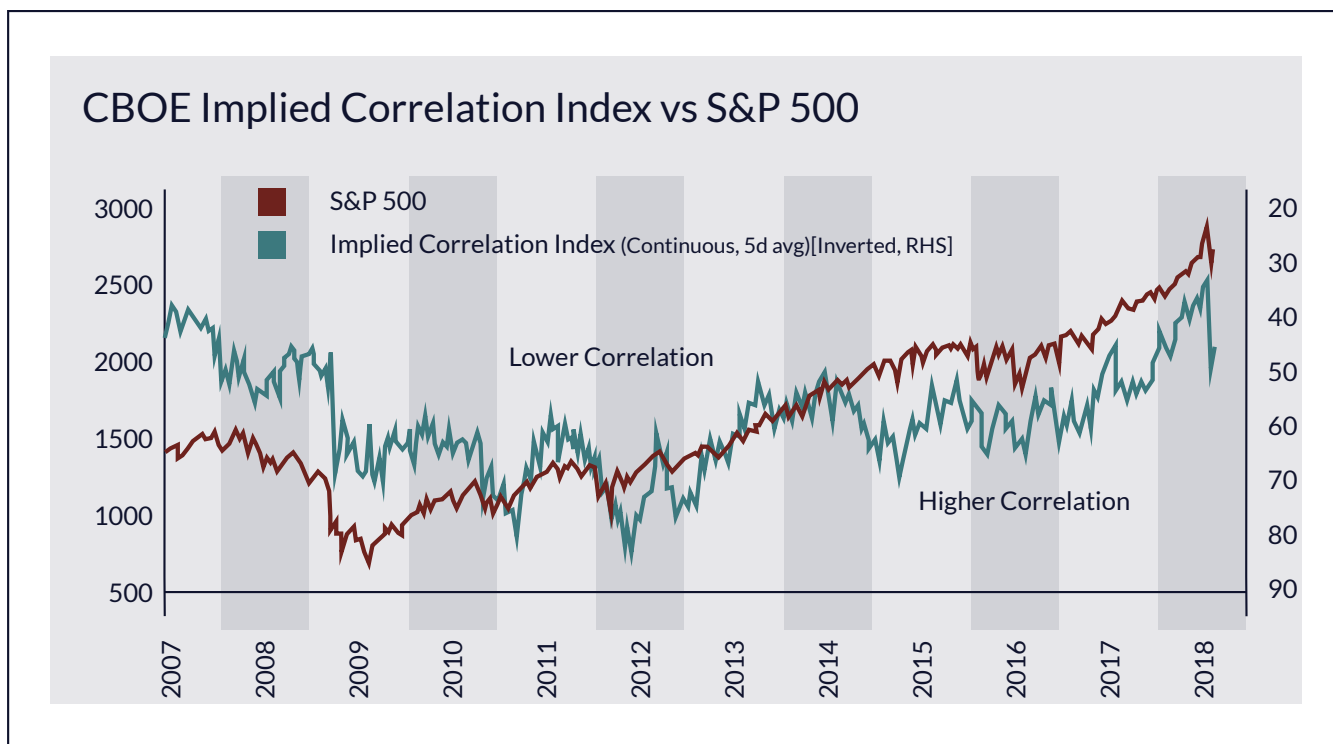
*Since the early 2000s, equity markets have been increasing in correlation.*

As you can see, equity markets are increasing in correlation. The two lines in the chart move in near-identical lockstep.

When the Dow dips, Frankfurt and Tokyo are likely to do the same. And the story is similar when markets go up. U.S. stocks and global stocks are moving in the same direction at the same time, and have been doing so for years.

That may decrease the value of diversifying into international stocks — but what about different sectors?

Sadly, the correlations have been increasing there too. Especially when it comes to dips — just when you need protection most.



*Correlation between all options on the S&P 500 before, during and after the 2008 market crisis.*

The above chart shows the correlation between all options on the S&P 500 before, during and after the market crisis that hit a few years back. As you can see, correlation steadily increased as things got bad — with a huge spike right when the markets were at their worst.

Correlation went down a bit as the markets recovered — shown as the graph going upward — but correlation has started increasing again recently.

This is no coincidence. The moment an investor most needs protection — during a major crash — fear causes all stocks to behave, basically, the same.

### **And that movement is bad news for your wealth.**

Similar lockstep patterns can emerge for rising bubbles — though they tend to only hit a single sector (like tech stocks at the turn of the century).

Crashes, on the other hand, are universal.

This behavior is why most portfolios aren't as diversified as their owners believe. It's why every wise investor should own unrelated asset classes as well.

It's why I believe every investor should hold rare stamps.

But diversification isn't the end of the story, either.

## Unbeatable Performance

Let me tell you a story.

In the late 1930s, in the shadows of the Great Depression, a soon-to-be mother got a bright idea: invest in stamps as a way to pay for her unborn son's education.

Her plan was to buy a number of collectible and commemorative stamps and keep them in good condition while she waited for them to appreciate in value.

Let's be clear — she was ahead of her time.

Back then, a few wise folk saw the investment potential of stamps, but they were mostly viewed as a hobby — a collection, and a bookish one at that.

Even those who thought differently and took a contrarian approach usually saw an asset hedge — but not a full-fledged investment. The fact that this woman could see an opportunity here was remarkable.

Unfortunately, her taste in stamps was less remarkable. In 1961, her son took hundreds of pounds of the stamps she collected into the heart of San Francisco, hoping these “magic beans” would produce a nice, educational “beanstalk.”

He returned brokenhearted.

You see, the stamps his mother had spent her life collecting weren't even worth what she paid for them originally. The two were devastated.

But don't worry: There's a happy twist coming, of course.



*The Great Depression was the worst economic downturn in the history of the industrialized world, lasting from 1929 to 1939.*

The son was bright enough to earn a scholarship to Duke. In fact, everyone would soon know her son: Bill Gross, the “Bond King” — worth over \$2 billion today.

And while Gross earned his wealth with bonds, he’s also known as one the greatest stamp collectors in the world.

Touched by his mother’s efforts, Gross decided to prove that she had the right idea, if the wrong execution.

Instead of buying fresh sheets of stamps, he invested in old ones. Instead of getting purpose-printed collectibles, he found rarities.

“It’s four times profit . . .  
It’s better than the stock  
market.”

—Bill Gross, “Bond King”

And instead of losing money, his investment gained. “It’s four times profit,” Gross told reporters after an auction of his British stamp collection in 2007. “It’s better than the stock market.”

Gross may have started his stamp collection as a tribute to his mother. And he may view it as a hobby more than an investment (the proceeds from his stamp auctions almost always go to charities like Doctors Without Borders).

But in the process, Bill Gross stumbled across one of the best investments in the world today.

## A Performance to Envy

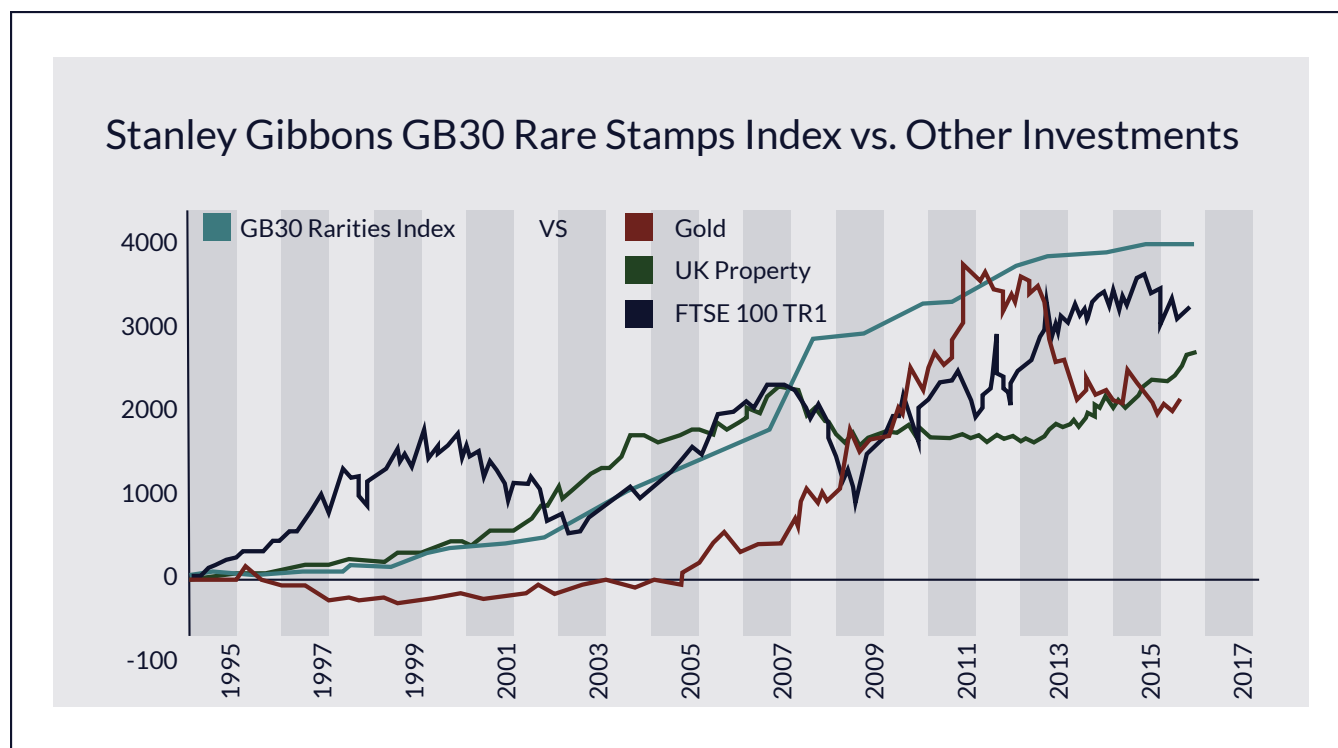
The difference between Bill Gross and his mother was the types of stamps collected. Common stamps aren’t worth much, but rare stamps are a different breed entirely.

It’s no coincidence that such rare stamps are called investment-grade.

And it’s no coincidence that some of the savviest wealth creators of our time like them. Just take a look at the performance of the Stanley Gibbons GB30 rare stamps index versus a host of other investments:

But you know what? British stamps aren’t even the best performing group in the bunch.

That distinction belongs to China.



*Stanley Gibbons GB30 rare stamps consistently perform better than gold, real estate and the London Stock Exchange benchmark index.*

## The Philatelic World Expands

It's no secret that China's new wealth has been affecting markets in every corner of the Earth.

But what few people know is a number of China's nouveau riche have quite a taste for stamps.

Indeed, Chinese collectors have been flocking to rare stamps in large enough numbers that some popular Chinese stamps were doubling in value every six months not too long ago.

And while Chinese collectors tend to favor Chinese stamps, they are also interested in rare stamps from other parts of the globe.

But it gets even better. Because — while Chinese stamps have been on a tear recently — the market has started to settle down.

And the newest hot markets look to be India, Africa and also the Middle East.

Not coincidentally, three of the areas with the best economic growth at the moment.

None of these stamp areas has taken off to the same degree that Chinese stamps just did. But all are showing the classic signs of a major bull market on the horizon.

The internet and online auctions have made it so easy for anyone to buy anywhere that demand has risen across the board.

It's a tremendous time to be a collector. But it's an even better time to be an investor.

The number of collectors who can invest is growing — most especially in Asia.

The number of investors remains small — but is also growing exponentially.

### **Demand is only going in one direction — up.**

And supply isn't increasing. In fact supply inherently decreases over time as stamps are damaged, lost or destroyed.

For example, there are only so many inverted Jennies out there, and there aren't any more being made.

(An Inverted Jenny is a misprinted plane stamp out of America — a very valuable rarity.)

Stamps have been a safe store of wealth since British royalty jumped on board. The asset class has increased in value by double digits since the 1950s, without ever losing money. And when the markets all lose their heads, stamps have traditionally performed their best.

With that kind of history — and future — you can see why I think every good investor should have some of their money in stamps.

But now it's time to define an investment-grade stamp — and figure out how you can get some for yourself.



*Look through your grandparents' stamp collection — find the Inverted Jenny and you could add a few zeroes to your bank account.*



# Identifying Investment-Grade Stamps

There are six main things to concern yourself with when figuring out the worth of any stamp — and whether you should buy it:

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>1. Popularity of the subject area</b> | <b>4. Authenticity</b> |
| <b>2. Rarity and/or scarcity</b>         | <b>5. Liquidity</b>    |
| <b>3. Quality</b>                        | <b>6. Price</b>        |

Each of these areas is extremely important — and which one has the most weight will vary from individual stamp to individual stamp — so let's spend a little time on each one.

## 1. Popularity

While this is incredibly important, it's also extremely easy to understand and to test.

Simply put — how popular is the type of stamp you're looking at?

Traditionally, U.S. and U.K. stamps have been the most popular, for the longest time. Both have long histories of attracting investors.

But as mentioned earlier, the universe of popular stamps has grown in recent years. Chinese stamps have entered the premier class, and a few other geographical areas — like India and parts of Africa — are growing quickly.

As a general rule, more popular areas and genres see greater trade frequency. You can get a pretty good idea what those are by doing anecdotal surveys of any stamp shows you might attend, or looking through what's on offer online through stamp auction sites, or even on eBay.

(One caveat: You'll do a better job figuring this out by looking at what's sold, as opposed to what's for sale. There might be a lot of sellers trying to unload Jamaican stamps from the 1950s, for instance, but no one's biting. If, on the other hand, you find a lot of Jamaican stamps from the 1950s have sold recently, that's an indication that they are, indeed, popular.)

Now, while popularity is a great broad-based guide to which stamps are likely to move, don't ever use this metric alone.

Not only does overall popularity correlate poorly with demand for any individual stamp — it also doesn't do a good job of capturing rare stamps that are, individually, very popular. Even if their overall area isn't.

That brings us to the second criterion of worth...

## 2. Rarity and Scarcity

This also should be fairly obvious to anyone familiar with the way markets work.

The lower the supply, the greater the value — assuming demand is there.

And with most rare stamps, scarcity feeds the demand. This is simple economics in action.

That's why the Magenta 1c British Guiana stamp is the most valuable stamp in the world — going for \$9,480,000 in 2014.

The stamp is, in most ways, unremarkable. It doesn't have any fine artwork. It's not in great condition. It's been used, it has a cancellation mark on it, it somehow lost all four corners.

And though it is old for a stamp — used in 1856 — age alone is not a guarantee of the value of a stamp.

No — what makes this stamp so valuable is it's one of a kind.

The Magenta wasn't even supposed to be a stamp. It came about because the stamps that were supposed to be used were lost — the ship they were sent on sunk on the way to British Guiana.

So rather than go a couple months without any stamps, the British Guiana postmaster created these substitutes.



*Some 1950 Jamaican stamps for sale on Amazon, in case you were wondering what they looked like.*

They were completely forgotten... until a young boy interested in stamps found one lying on the side of a dusty road.

It got sold up the chain, until eventually a dedicated stamp expert realized this was a one-of-a-kind find.

**And its value just shot up from there.**

There's even an apocryphal story about the Magenta that's often told, probably untrue but wonderfully illustrative. It speaks of a business tycoon who purchased the Magenta 1c... and then heard that another had been found.

He brought in the finder of the other and a number of stamp experts. The experts examined both and declared they couldn't tell the difference — the second appeared to be legit.

At that point, the tycoon paid exactly what he'd paid for the original Magenta... and then proceeded to put out his cigar on the new one, destroying it.

The rarity was worth just that much. (Not to mention there's a certain ego satisfaction being the only person who can own something.)

The point of this story isn't to illustrate the opulent lives of the probably-too-rich — it's to show just how important rarity and scarcity is. It can make even the ugliest stamps incomparably valuable.

Errors also create rarity — which is why the Inverted Jenny is so sought after.

Only one pane — of 100 stamps — was made of the Inverted Jenny, with the plane mistakenly printed upside down.

Made in 1918, the Inverted Jenny is one of the rarest and most prized stamps around — every serious collector wants to own one, if they can afford it.

A single Inverted Jenny was sold for \$977,500 in 2007. A block of four went for \$2.7 million in 2005.



*The Magenta British Guiana 1c stamp — the most valuable stamp in the world.*

Now, the truth is most of us will never have a chance to own famous rarities like these.

They don't often come up for auction — the 1c Magenta could easily go 100 years between sales.

And when they do, the price tag will often be out of reach for anyone whose net worth doesn't start with a "b."

However, there are still plenty of other rarities that aren't quite as rare, and thus are more affordable.

After all — remember the GB250 is made up of the 250 rarest stamps from Great Britain. And the China 200 has the 200 rarest Chinese stamps.

Most of those are in reach of investors with a few thousand to spend on a stamp or four.

Many of them are errors as well — like a portrait head facing the wrong way, or words printed backward.

There are too many options to go through here. But you can find plenty of good lists with simple searches of rare stamps — like [this one](#). Or make use of a stamp catalog — we recommend our favorites in the next section.

I suggest you focus in on a particular area of interest and then see what rare stamps are available in your price range.

The important thing here is — and it's worth stressing again — rare stamps are pretty much the only stamps worth investing in. If there are plenty available, the value just won't go up — there's too much supply.

### 3. Quality

Here comes the most difficult area to pin down — and also one of the most important.



*A signature on the back side, used to combat forgery of the simple stamp. Adding to the rarity of this stamp, all other issues had magenta as the 4c color, and yellow as the 1c. Meaning this is a rare error version of what was already a rare issue.*

And — before you get too scared by the rest of this section — know that if you don't want to worry about grading quality yourself, there are experts out there who will be happy to do it for you. Often at no cost, if they are helping you make a purchase.

Which is good — because it doesn't get more important than quality.

The quality — or condition — of a stamp can have a major effect on its price.

Sure, when you've got a one-of-a-kind like the Magenta 1c, quality doesn't matter much — it is, by definition, the finest-quality example available.

But for basically every other stamp in the world, quality can be the defining characteristic that determines the value of a stamp.

Take the Penny Black. There are a relatively large number of Penny Blacks available in the markets. However, the quality varies quite a bit — and makes a huge difference in price.

If you go on eBay today, you can find authentic Penny Blacks in poor, used condition for under \$20.

Meanwhile, the most expensive Penny Black — in mint condition, coming off one of the first printed sheets — was sold in 2011 for over \$345,000.

That's a huge difference.







But for basically every other stamp in the world, quality can be the defining characteristic that determines the value of a stamp.

To give a more generic example, a stamp in poor condition might sell for \$5 (and never appreciate in value), while one in fine condition could go for \$100, very fine for \$200, and superb for \$500.

This is also where unscrupulous dealers can take advantage of amateur collectors or investors. Especially since grading stamps is difficult — and there's no hard-and-fast grading system.

That's why if you're going to invest in stamps — and especially if you're going to go out on your own to do so, rather than work with a trusted broker — you've got to become a master of determining the value of a stamp.

While there might not be an agreed-upon system for grading stamps, it still can be helpful to think of stamps in a few different categories:

-  **Poor condition** (never buy this)
-  **Fine condition** (only get this if you're desperate, or it's a very rare stamp)
-  **Very fine** (this can be worth getting)
-  **Very very fine, or extra fine** (these will be the bread-and-butter grades for most investment portfolios)
-  **Superb** (always worth getting if you can find it in a rare stamp)
-  **Mint** (extremely difficult to find, but obviously the cream of the crop)

There are a few other major contributors to condition you should always keep in mind.

Other things being equal, cancelled stamps — those which have been used and gotten an ink stamp overtop showing they've been used — are generally worth less than unused stamps.

And unhinged stamps — those that have never been mounted and have their original glue intact — are worth more than those which have been mounted, which often means stuck into a display binder.

Those are the easiest things to measure. More difficult are the qualitative aspects of a stamp.

Exactly what you're looking for can vary a bit stamp to stamp — you have to do your homework to figure out what makes a truly outstanding example of any particular stamp.

That said, there are a few broad categories that you'll want to check out:



## Centering

Many stamps aren't perfectly centered — they've got unequal margins.

Not every valuable stamp will have perfect centering — much depends on the overall rarity and quality of the print run. But as a general rule, the closer to perfectly centered, the better.

## Color

There are plenty of ways the color of a stamp can be off.

It could have been printed when ink in the printing machine was running low — producing pale colors.

The stamp might not have been well stored, leading to a loss of color or oxidation of the ink.

The stamp might have been poorly handled, leading to smudges or loss of ink.

Whatever the case, you want to study the color of your stamp and get it as close to its original perfect state as possible.

## Printing

Separate from color, there can be different qualities of printing.

For instance, some stamps go through a few stages of printing — and you can get errors this way.



*This stamp's image is too close to the top and right margins.*



*Notice how the black type says "1918" on the left and "918" on the right — the "1" has worn off.*



*The odd "design" on the left-hand stamp is an error — it only occurred on the 15th stamp of each sheet for this particular stamp.*

In other cases, the plate used to print stamps might have gotten old and worn out, producing errors.

Some plates simply had flaws in them that didn't get caught before stamps went to print.

There are all sorts of printer errors you should watch out for.

Making this even more complex, some printer mistakes are coveted "error" stamps — very rare and very valuable.



*The black print is supposed to go overtop this stamp's image — but it's supposed to be uniformly aligned. Notice how much lower it is on the stamp on the right.*

But those are the exception. In most cases, you want a well-printed stamp that is rare. Just make sure — before you make a purchase — you know the difference for the particular stamp you are looking at.

## Perforations

Not all stamps came on perforated sheets — in fact, the first stamps were produced without perforations. And many modern stamps don't have them either.

But even when stamps are made with perforations, not all will have them on all sides — such as the stamps on the edge of a sheet.

However, where present, you want the best perforations possible — full teeth and clean holes.

## Gum or Glue

Stamp gum is the adhesive on the back of a stamp that holds it to an envelope. The best stamps will have even gum, without any creases, major missed areas or major buildup in any one area.



*Very nice perforation on this stamp.*



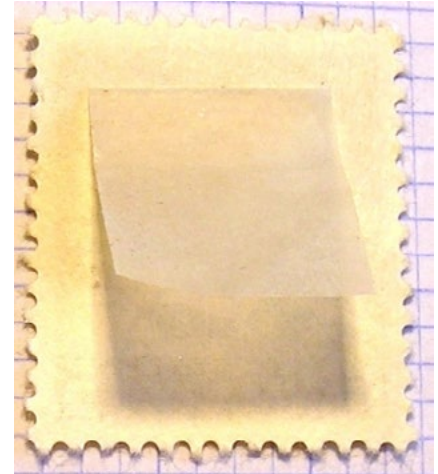
*Awful perforation on this one.*

The back of a good stamp will also not be “hinged.” Some collectors will stick stamps directly into albums while others attach a “hinge” to a stamp and use that to affix it in place.

While this was popular with stamp collectors at one point — and still is in some circles — it always reduces the value of a stamp.

In some cases, hinges can be removed by experts, bringing the value of a stamp back up — but it will never be as valuable as a stamp that has never been hinged or had its gum attached to anything.

Using the gum on the back of a stamp is very similar to driving a new car off the lot — you’re probably looking at half the value washed away, instantaneously.



*A hinge on the back of a stamp.*

As you can see, there are a lot of factors to consider when determining the quality of a stamp. There are people who spend decades dedicated to the craft.

If you love stamps, you should do the same — it’s one of the best ways to get schooled on the history, and beauty, of stamps.

However, if you only want to use stamps as an investment, we recommend you use an honest broker, with many in-house experts, to help you assemble a portfolio.

Later in this report, there will be a section outlining the tools of the trade you can use to help you determine quality — these are not things you eyeball. Not when you’re potentially investing thousands in a stamp and its quality is key to its value.

We’ll also introduce you to some of the best brokers working in the stamp world today — people you can trust to help you build the perfect portfolio for your investment level, without you having to get too involved in the nitty-gritty of grading stamp quality.

Whatever level of involvement you want, you’ll be able to invest in rare, valuable stamps — after having done years of homework or none at all.

#### 4. Authenticity

Again, this point doesn't require too much of an explanation.

There are forgeries out there. And no stamp will ever be very valuable if you can't guarantee its authenticity.

This can sometimes be very difficult. Some forgeries are so masterful that there are experts devoted to sniffing them out — literally. There are forgeries that have only been found out because an expert smelled the stamp gum and it was off for the time period.

That's why — unless you are a world-class expert yourself — you should only buy from trusted, long-standing dealers who can prove the authenticity of a stamp.

There can be some exceptions — for instance, if a stamp comes with compelling authentic documentation. But even then you should beware — it's easier for forgers to make false documentation than false stamps.

Authenticity is further augmented by provenance. Stamps that once belonged to famous collections, such as that of Bill Gross, attract premium valuations.

Luckily, there are a few trusted dealers out there, and we'll introduce you to our favorite later in this report.

#### 5. Liquidity

Having a stamp that no one else wants to buy isn't very profitable. That's why you should have at least some idea about the demand — and, by extension, the liquidity — of any stamp you purchase.

In most cases, this shouldn't be an issue. Rare, valuable stamps became so specifically because demand has consistently outstripped supply.

No — this point is more about avoiding the purchase of a stamp that you've fallen in love with for whatever reason — but no one else recognizes its charm.

Owning such a stamp is fine, of course. Just remember — those sorts of stamps are for collecting, not investing. Don't look to them as a store of wealth or as an asset that will appreciate over time.

Your appreciation may grow. But not your bottom line.

## 6. Price

This one is as simple as it gets.

Whenever possible, try to purchase your rare stamp at a good value.

It goes without saying, the lower the price when you purchase something, the more profit you'll have if and when you someday sell it.

That's all the truer when we're talking about an asset class like stamps, where each example is, in many ways, entirely unique.

Now, most markets are already very efficient when it comes to pricing stamps.

That said, if you want to hunt for bargains, you'll often do best purchasing from smaller markets.

A worldwide online auction will attract every knowledgeable person around.

While a local estate sale might make offerings in front of only a handful of people interested in stamps, a smaller handful knows how to value stamps properly.

The same can be said for local antique or consignment shops.

In the vast majority of cases, they won't have anything of great worth. But when you find that one diamond in the rough, you'll tell the story for years.



# What You Need to Get Started

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Now that you know the basics of how to invest in stamps, you need the tools of the trade.

This isn't an exhaustive list — if you like toys and gadgets, stamp collecting offers as many as any hobby.

But this should be enough to get you started.

## ✓ **Safe Storage**

Most stamp collectors have binders that they stick or hinge their stamps in.

That is not what you want.

There are hingeless albums, made of foil, that claim they can protect your stamp color, condition and gum. Most are good enough for most stamps.

However, if you want to protect valuable stamps in the best way possible, you want to put your stamp in an individual case.

Before you purchase a stamp, you should have its storage in place.

It should go without saying that you don't want that storage exposed to any temperature extremes, too much light (which will break down the ink) or humidity.

Of course, if that's difficult for you to arrange, some brokers or dealers are happy to store your stamps for you in a climate-controlled environment, where they are guaranteed to stay in the best possible condition. Indeed — we've got a special storage deal arranged for *Unconventional Wealth* readers, which we'll tell you about in just a moment.

## ✓ **Stamp Catalogs**

To get started you will need a stamp catalog. Which catalog you buy will depend on your area of interest.



For British stamps and stamps from the British Commonwealth and Empire countries (including Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and Hong Kong) we would recommend you use the Stanley Gibbons catalogs.

For U.S. stamps we would recommend the U.S.-based catalog producer, Scott.

Catalogs list all the stamps you can collect for each country in date order and provide a price guide for each stamp. You will need to be careful to read the introductory guidance notes to make sure you understand how to identify and price your stamps.

### ✓ **Stamp Tweezers**

Because stamps are made of relatively delicate paper — and some of the most valuable stamps can be well over 100 years old — you have to handle them gingerly.

These are not investments you want to just pick up with your hands. The grease on your fingers could smudge them, or you could accidentally crease one picking it up off a flat surface or any of a hundred other things could go wrong.

That's why philatelists have created their own type of tweezer.

You can see the end is blunted, so you don't take any chance of stabbing or marking up your stamp.



*The stamp tweezer.*

It is also very flat, to help you get underneath a stamp you want to pick up.

They are also very cheap — you can get a decent pair for under \$5, and a great pair for under \$10.

When you're handling an investment of several hundred or perhaps several thousand dollars, it's well worth it to make sure you handle it correctly. This is a very small price to pay for immense rewards.

### ✓ **Magnifying Glasses or Loupes**

Remember that laundry list of things to look for when measuring quality? Well, most of those things are difficult to see easily with the naked eye.

That's why you need a device that can help you see down to individual printed dots. If you are planning to assess quality yourself — or even if you just want to get a better understanding of what makes a stamp great after it's been verified by an expert — you need a magnifier.

### ✓ A Good Watermark Detector or Two

Most stamps have watermarks, proving authenticity.

And many of those watermarks are invisible to the naked eye.

You might be able to see them holding a stamp up to a bright light... but if you're going through a number of stamps, that will quickly get tiring. And it often leaves you wondering if you're seeing a watermark or just spots.

That's why it's a good idea to have a purpose-built watermark detector.

Some dealers will test for watermarks using benzene — lighter fluid.

You don't want to do that. It may dry off the stamp quickly enough and not cause traditional water damage — but benzene often makes colors bleed. Once you know to look for it, you'll see a number of "mint" stamps at stamp shows that have been damaged through a benzene watermark test.



*The watermark detector.*

Instead, you can get an electric watermark detector for newer stamps. It's a bit pricey, but if you're collecting rare and valuable stamps from later eras, it's worth the price.

For older stamps, electric watermark detectors often won't work. In that case, you'll want to fill a tray with watermark fluid, like Prinz Super Safe. It won't cause the damage of benzene, and though it does involve getting your stamp wet, it only takes a small amount of fluid to conduct the test, it dries in moments and you can be confident your stamp will be fine afterward.

### ✓ Color Keys

How are you going to know what color to look for without a color key? You won't, that's how.

A good color key will give you all the info you need to determine how true the color of your stamp is. Your key will be ordered by geography and era — a “red” in 1860s England will be very different from a “red” in 1960s South Africa.

And you’ll have no way of knowing what a stamp should look like without a color guide. Again, this isn’t a very expensive piece of kit, though it’s very important.

### ✓ **A Perforation Gauge**

There’s no better way to check the quality of the perforation on a stamp — and get a better idea of just how centered it is — than with a perforation gauge.

This is really only necessary for someone who is buying rare stamps on their own — it won’t enhance your enjoyment once you’ve got a stamp. If you’re going through channels that provide experts, they’ll take care of this for you.

A perforation gauge is the tool of an expert stamp investor or dedicated stamp collector.

But if that describes you, then you won’t be disappointed having this tool. And — like most of the items on this list — it’s very cheap as well, selling for under \$10 in most cases.

### ✓ **Ultraviolet Lamps**

This only applies to very serious investors focused on modern stamps.

If that describes you, specialized ultraviolet lamps for stamps will help you check for phosphor and fluorescent papers used in modern stamps.

This is one of the few tools that costs a bit — often over \$100. But cheaper versions won’t do a good job of identifying phosphors and what-have-you, and in the worst case can actually damage your stamp.

So if you want to test the paper of your modern stamps, it’s worth making the investment in a good UV lamp specially designed to view stamps.

Our preferred broker — whom we’ll introduce you to in a moment — can help you to buy all the tools you would need. You will only need them, however, if you plan to go it alone and teach yourself the skills of successful stamp investing.

# Stamp Investing Strategies:

## How to Buy for Your Personal Goals

At this point, you know enough to start assembling a portfolio. In theory at least — a lot of this information will only make sense after you've put it into practice and gained some hands-on experience with stamps.

(There is a shortcut around this, which we'll introduce in the next chapter.)

However, just because you know how to grade stamps and what kinds of stamps you want to buy doesn't mean you're ready to craft your own personal portfolio.

The reason? You need to know what you want your portfolio to do for you.

We'll lay out the best investment strategy for your goals in just a moment, but first there are a few strategies that apply to any stamp portfolio.

### 1. Invest for the Long Haul

You don't day trade stamps.

For one thing — while stamps are a relatively liquid asset — it still takes time to buy or sell.

You have to determine the best method to sell — auction or listing. You have to determine the best broker to sell through — with different fee structures and requirements for each.

And of course, every time a stamp changes hands, you run the risk of dealing with damage.

Add in the fact that stamp values are clumpy.

When you look at a broad index — like the GB250 — those clumps even out and produce a smooth curve.

But for any individual stamp, values move in a much jumpier way. A stamp could remain static for three years and then increase in value 50% in two months.

In the short term, it's even possible for the worth of a stamp to drop temporarily, before advancing.

The point is stamp prices are very hard to predict if you're only looking a month, or even a year, out.

Most serious investors have a time horizon of at least five years — any less than that and you risk selling before a stamp has had a chance to appreciate.

So if you've got money that will be headed out the door in less than five years — if you buy a new house, for instance, or are paying for a child's education — don't put that cash in stamps.

Only invest what you can afford to leave alone for five-plus years.

That's enough time. You'll be able to see a return on your investment. Any less than that and you're not allowing the expected growth rates to crystallize.

## **2. Buy the Best You Can Afford**

All else being equal, you should get the most valuable stamp you can afford.

The reason is simple: The rarer the stamp, and the higher the price, the faster the appreciation.

This isn't a hard-and-fast rule, but it's a very strong generalization.

It's a simple matter of supply and demand. The highest prices are fetched by the rarest, most in-demand stamps. And that dynamic will be as true tomorrow as it is today.

It's important to note — this does not mean you should simply buy the most expensive stamp you can find. Remember, if you can find a stamp available at a discount, you start off ahead of the game.

But it does mean you should get the stamp that has the highest average price. Specifically, the highest price when it's sold (what someone is asking for on eBay may have no basis in reality).

## **3. Diversify Your Portfolio**

While you want to max out the value of the stamps you buy, that doesn't mean you should put all your eggs in one basket.

Because — while the overall stamp market inexorably marches upward — any individual stamp can deviate from the trend.

If you only buy one stamp, you could do very well as it jumps forward by leaps and bounds.

Or you could get unlucky and see the value barely move for years.

To have a balanced portfolio, you want a minimum of four or five stamps.

It's virtually impossible to get all those stamps at the same price point, even if you want to — supply is just too low to allocate your investment that way.

So don't be worried if one of your stamps is worth more than the others, for instance.

The rarer the stamp, and  
the higher the price, the  
faster the appreciation.

That said, you don't want the spread to be too large. If you are investing \$10,000, you don't want a single stamp worth \$9,000 and then four stamps in the \$250 range.

As a general rule — at least when you're getting started, before you build out a larger portfolio — you don't want any stamp to make up more than half the value of your collection, nor do you want any stamp worth less than a tenth of your overall stake.

Follow these general rules and you'll have a well-built portfolio.

Now to make a portfolio that performs just the way you want it to.

## Protecting Your Wealth

Some people want to own stamps primarily as a hedge against equities and other assets.

As you've seen throughout this report, stamps perform admirably in that capacity.

That said, there are some stamps with value more assured than others.

The premier examples of this are U.K. stamps.

U.K. stamps have the longest history. Not only because the first stamps came out of the U.K., but also because stamp collecting and investing were born in Great Britain as well.

And Great Britain has been a rich country for a long time. And where the rich reside, stamp prices always are highest.

Boil it all down and Great Britain has the most mature marketplace, with the most trustworthy prices.

Which is why if you are looking to stamps as a place to store your wealth and guard it against any rough economic seas, U.K. stamps are the way to go.

U.S. stamps aren't far behind the U.K.... but they don't have the extra advantage of acting as a currency hedge as well (most U.K. stamps are bought and sold in pounds on the British Isles).

That's why, for a protection-oriented portfolio, we recommend going heavy on U.K. stamps, with one or two U.S. stamps thrown into the mix.

You should still make very healthy returns with this portfolio — don't forget, the GB250 index has advanced over 13% a year over the past decade and only measures British stamps.

And you are virtually guaranteeing you'll leave an extremely valuable, powerfully compounding and eminently healthy collection for the next generation, if that's your goal.

But you are giving up some potential gains — and potential risks — for the safety of the most venerable stamp marketplace around.

## Growing Your Wealth

If you are thinking of stamps more as a traditional investment, you want to try to capture as much movement as possible.

Which means you want a very balanced portfolio.

After all — it's hard to predict what category of stamps will perform best over any period of time. Most recently, U.K. stamps have made relatively modest gains while Chinese stamps — fueled by all the new wealth in that country — were doubling in value every six months not too long ago.



China has slowed slightly from that frenetic pace... but whether that's the sign of a true slowdown in demand, a saturated market or just investors taking a collective breath before diving back in, who knows?

Predicting exactly which stamps — or category of stamps — will jump in value is a fun game, but a fool's errand.

If you want to capture as much growth as possible with as little risk as possible, you want to own stamps from a variety of different places.

You can adjust the mix according to how much risk you want. For instance, you could own a single stamp from the U.K., another from the U.S., one from China and two from the developing world.

Or you could hold two from China, one from Western Europe and take a flyer on a Caribbean stamp.

The exact mix isn't that important. What is important is that you hit as many regions as possible, so you have the best chance of capturing whichever one is rising at any point in time.

And you have a couple from the more mature markets like the U.K., the U.S. or Western Europe, to guard against any potential downside from less developed markets.



*If you are looking to stamps as a place to store your wealth and guard it, U.K. stamps are the way to go.*

## Maximizing Your Wealth

If you aren't interested in stamps for safety but purely want to take advantage of the outsized growth potential from this asset class, you'll have a very different mix.

This is a highly speculative way to go about investing in stamps — you run the real risk of seeing your stake remain flat, or perhaps even decrease slightly in value.

But in exchange you also have the chance to see life-changing gains. High risk, high reward.

Because this is a riskier strategy, we recommend you take a smaller stake — and only invest money you won't miss or can afford to go without for a longer time.

Values should, eventually, go up, after all. But it could take longer than you expect.

For the more speculative stamps, you want to focus on regions that are up-and-coming.

**A great measure to use is sustained GDP growth.**

And right now, the two regions that are seeing the most action are the Asian subcontinent — primarily India and Sri Lanka — and Africa.

Both areas are seeing fast growth. Both have shown an interest in stamp investing recently — for the first time.

And both marketplaces show signs of breaking out, with returns that could easily beat those of more mature markets.

China deserves a spot in this portfolio as well — it's still growing at a fast pace and could still rack up a few years of triple-digit returns.

But the best bets for extremely rapid, outsized growth are India and Africa.

Predicting exactly which stamps — or category of stamps — will jump in value is a fun game, but a fool's errand.

We'd recommend a mix that looks something like one or two Chinese stamps, one or two from India and one or two from different African regions.

Before you make your purchase, remember — this portfolio carries higher risk than the others.

It would never go to zero or anything like that — that's one of the advantages in dealing with tangible assets that will always hold value. It's not like a stock that can go to zero if the company goes bankrupt.

But this is not the portfolio for safely guarding wealth. This is the portfolio for greedily growing your nest egg, with a little risk in the mix.

# Where to Buy Your Stamps

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You now have everything you need to start your collection.

In theory, at least. As you can see, there's a lot to take in, and it takes practice and knowledge to really become an expert in the field of stamps.

If you want to grow your experience, we recommend you start small — don't even begin with investment-grade stamps.

Instead, attend a stamp show (there's almost certainly one near you) or use an online auction, or a site like Stanley Gibbons, geared toward collectors and make a purchase of some cheap stamps.

Study them. Put each stamp through its paces. Handle it in different ways, to see how it reacts. Figure out what kinds of stamps you like.

Only after you've got a little experience under your belt — and you've learned enough to know which stamps are worth investing in — should you consider purchasing a true rare, investment-grade stamp.

**Of course, there's an easier way. At least, there is for you.**

And that's to work with a trusted dealer.

One that can identify rare, investment-grade stamps for you — so you don't have to worry about misidentifying anything.

One that can authenticate every stamp — so you don't have to worry about fraudsters, or even legitimate mistakes.

One that has a team of experts to take care of quality control — putting decades of experience to work, grading and pricing stamps correctly (and often finding you underpriced bargains).

And one that can take care of buying, selling and even storing and caring for the stamps for you, if you like.

*Unconventional Wealth* spent months sifting through all the options out there, identifying the best one.

Some dealers were great at valuing stamps... but didn't have the volume to offer enough stamps for our readers.

Some had plenty of volume... but of variable quality, without a good way to separate the wheat from the chaff.

## The Best Way to Buy Stamps

Only one dealer satisfied all our criteria: **JustCollecting**.



*JustCollecting makes investing in stamps easy...*

JustCollecting is relatively new to the scene, only having been founded a couple years ago.

But the company is rich with experience.

That starts at the top — founder Mike Hall was the CEO of Stanley Gibbons for 17 years.

Mentioned throughout this report, Stanley Gibbons is probably the most respected — and certainly the most venerable — company in the stamp space.

However, that said, Stanley Gibbons is very focused on collectors.

Mike, on the other hand, has long been drawn to the stamp investing space. And since the board of Stanley Gibbons didn't want to give much energy to investing, Mike started a new company focused on investing.

To be clear, JustCollecting isn't limited to stamps. It deals in all sorts of rare, tangible assets.

At least all those that promise juicy returns.

Because JustCollecting is squarely focused on investing, everything about the company is geared to making a portfolio as quick, painless — and profitable — as possible.

To that end, JustCollecting...



...has a massive staff of experts to verify, judge and price out stamps. This field is tricky enough, and most experts are narrowly focused — on late-19th-century British stamps, for instance. JustCollecting has every part of the world and every time period covered by at least one expert, and usually more than a few



...has a vibrant online marketplace — with one of the largest collections of stamps in the world. JustCollecting holds more than enough stamps itself to satisfy the demand of most investors. But when you want a stamp that JustCollecting doesn't have, the company's network is sure to fill your desires



...authenticates all stamps that pass through its hands. You don't have to cross your fingers and hope you're getting what you paid for — JustCollecting stands behind the stamps it sells (and verifies those it buys). And has generous insurance in place in the unlikely event that a mistake is made.



...will provide your own personal relationship manager with a direct phone line and email. JustCollecting prides itself on building client relationships that last a lifetime.



...will create a personalized portfolio, just for you.

It's that last point we should talk about in greater depth.

Whatever the reason you're investing in stamps... whatever goal you have... whatever time frame you're thinking of or interest you want to indulge... JustCollecting can create a portfolio unlike any other, with your wishes as the guiding force.

And your future gains as the guiding light.

That's the sort of service JustCollecting offers all clients.

But we've worked out a special deal for *Unconventional Wealth* readers.

Usually, JustCollecting only offers these personalized concierge services for those investing \$15,000 or more.

But you being a reader of *Unconventional Wealth*, JustCollecting has dropped their minimum to only \$5,000 for the first 100 investors who get in the door.

(After that, you'll still get a great deal — with portfolios starting at \$10,000.)

And — even better — they'll let you get started with only a 10% deposit — just \$500 (\$1,000 after the first 100 readers claim their spot and this offer closes).

With your deposit, they'll start assembling your portfolio for you immediately. Buying stamps for you even if it means laying out more money than you've yet put into your account.

## More Than Just a Seller

On top of that, JustCollecting offers specialist insurance and secure storage services. Usually charged at 0.5% of the original purchase price of a collection annually, for Unconventional Wealth readers who start a portfolio with JustCollecting, all fees are waived for the first year of your investment.

And after that, you can have the fees waived every year in which you make a stamp purchase.

As part of this overall management service, JustCollecting also provide you with a free annual valuation report and ongoing advice focused on continually enhancing your collection's growth rate.

So if you aren't sure you know how to keep your stamps in pristine condition, JustCollecting takes away all those worries.

Finally, when you are ready to realize your profits, JustCollecting is happy to handle sales for you as well.

It truly is a one-stop shop — the easiest, fastest, most efficient way to get your stamp portfolio off the ground in no time flat.

If that appeals to you, you can get started by [clicking on this link](#) and beginning the process immediately. Soon thereafter, your personal stamp concierge will contact you and craft a portfolio perfect for your needs.

There is no better way for a nonexpert to get started. Which is why we give the JustCollecting portfolio service our full-throated endorsement.

Of course, if you prefer to do all the work for yourself — all the studying of stamp rarities and errors, all the judging of stamp quality and value — that's fine as well.

However you want to get started — with [JustCollecting](#), or on your own — the important thing is that you start.



# Conclusion

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Stamps are easily one of the best investments out there today.

Averaging double-digit growth every year, the gains you can get from stamps rival those of any other investment.

And as a rare, tangible asset class, stamps offer much greater safety and security than you can find with equities or other conventional places to park your money.

There is a barrier to entry in the form of required knowledge and expertise.

But that's a good thing — it keeps profit high, as stamps simply aren't that efficient a market. You can still get great deals on individual rare stamps — and as long as you don't put yourself into a financial pickle, you can wait until your price is met to sell.

And of course, using our favorite dealer, [JustCollecting](#), you can skip the training that most have to go through before they can confidently invest.

Finally, stamps are a perfect hedge against other investments in your portfolio. If the markets swoon in the coming months or years, you'll have extra confidence knowing you own an asset that won't do the same.

There's a reason stamps are one of our favorite assets. And — once you've experienced what stamps can do for your bottom line — we're confident you'll feel the same.

Happy investing.

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