

# The perplexing history of the postcard

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[touchnote.com/blog/postcard-history](https://touchnote.com/blog/postcard-history)

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Back before [#hotdoglegs](#) and [#seastheday](#), if you wanted to let friends know about your travels, the best way was to send a postcard – and it’s a trend that’s on the rise again.

It’s no surprise, really. A postcard lets us know that a friend or family member is thinking of us, whether on a trip or at home. And that personal touch warms the heart in a way that a social media post can’t replicate.

## Who made the first postcard?

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People have been drawing and mailing their own illustrated cards and letters for centuries, so unfortunately, we can’t really be sure who created the “first” postcard. We’re going to guess it was an Egyptian queen sending a coded message on a scrap of papyrus, or a Greek schoolboy scratching out a love note on a tablet.

But we do have some clues as to how the modern concept of the postcard came about.

## Postcards – the prequel

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In 1777, the French engraving company Demaison printed sheets of cards that you could cut out, write messages on and send in the post without an envelope.

Sadly, almost nobody bought them. Apparently, they didn't like the thought of others being able to read their messages. It seems the good people of 18th century France would not have been fans of Facebook or Twitter.

Almost a century later in America in 1861, the stationer John P. Charlton copyrighted the concept of the "post card". But his didn't feature images, just nice floral designs around the edges.

In 1870, it's believed that the first picture postcard was produced in France by Léon Besnardeau. There wasn't a space for a stamp, though, so unlike the earlier pictureless 'post cards', they were mailed in an envelope. So again, was this really even a postcard?

## **The first world-class postcard**

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A lot of great things happened at the Chicago World Fair in 1893, including the invention of the brownie by Bertha Palmer (thank you, Bertha!).

It's also where the first souvenir postcards were sold. You could choose from 10 full-color designs of the buildings on display at the World Fair, then post a brownie-smudged message to your friends.

## **Postcards take over the world**

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As printing techniques improved, postcards became cheaper to make, and they soon became a favorite way to share messages with friends and family.

Today, postcards are often sent from people on vacation, but they're also sent as thank you notes, for birthdays and just to let people know you're thinking of them.

## **Postcard fun facts**

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- The most expensive postcard was sold for \$40,000 at an auction in 2002. It was made in 1840 by London-based writer Theodore Hook, and featured a hand-painted caricature of postal clerks.
- An average American stamp contains 1/10th of a calorie in the backing adhesive.
- The first week of May is officially National Postcard week in America.
- Postcard collectors are called deltiologists – and it's the third most popular collectible hobby in the world after stamp and coin collecting.

## **Send a personalized postcard with TouchNote**

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Sending postcards has always been popular – and in recent years, this trend has grown.

With TouchNote , you can send ready-made postcards with a wide variety of illustrations and messages. Or add pictures of your vacation, your pets or pictures of you with your loved ones. Then personalize them with a message and cute stickers.

Best of all? No need to go to the post office. We'll send your TouchNote postcard, free of charge, anywhere in the world.

Click here to send a personalized postcard – and we'll give you 40% off your first postcard order\*

\*Limited time offer.