



Where in the world is: Afas and Issas, Venda, and
Azerbaijan?

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On occasion you find stamps from the French territory of Afas and Issas. This territory is located in East Africa at the junction of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. This country was created in 1967 and issued stamps for a ten-year period between 1967 and 1977. This country was created from the French Territory of Somali Coast and became the independent Republic of Djibouti on June 27, 1977. The seaport of Djibouti is a terminus of a railway linking the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa with the sea. This country during the period 1967-77 was operated as a French Overseas Territory. It had an area of 8,880 square miles and a population of 150,000 in 1974. During this period 128 commemorative, 55 airmail and 4 postage due stamps were issued.



Venda is also in Africa, in this case South Africa. Venda was created in 1979 as one of the South African self-governing tribal “homelands”. This homeland is located just south of Zimbabwe, and had as its capital Thohoyandou. In 1993, Venda along with three other homelands were dissolved and incorporated into a national South African system of nine provinces. Venda between 1979 and 1993 issued 280 stamps. Many of these stamps are quite colorful and depict local flora and fauna. Venda occupied 4,040 square miles and in 1980 had a population of 343,480 individuals.





Azerbaijan on the other hand is not in Africa. Azerbaijan is located in the southernmost part of the old Russian Eastern European Republic, bounded by Georgia, Dagestan, the Caspian Sea, Iran and Armenia. Now, Azerbaijan is an independent republic. This area has quite an interesting history. It was home to the Scythian tribes and part of the Roman Empire. It was overrun by the Turks in the 11th century and conquered by Russia in 1806 and 1813 respectively. It joined the USSR on December 30, 1922. It was then federated in 1922-23 with neighboring provinces of Armenia and Georgia into the Transcaucasian Federation. Azerbaijan became a constituent republic of the USSR in 1936. Azerbaijan declared independence on August 30, 1991 and became an independent state when the Soviet Union disbanded on December 26, 1991. The area of Azerbaijan is 32,686 square miles with a population of 7,855,576.



Stamps were first issued in 1919 and continued until replaced successively by those of the Transcaucasian Federation, Russia and the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1992. Between 1919 and 1924 Azerbaijan issued a total of 104 stamps. Between 1993 and 1996 the Azerbaijani Republic issued 331 commemorative and regular issues, 2 semi-postal stamps and 1 airmail stamp.

To make matters somewhat more confusing, Russia at the end of World War II invaded and occupied a province of Iran. When Russia withdrew, an autonomous government existed between May, 1946 and March 1946. During this brief independence, a set of 15 Iranian stamps overprinted with “NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN, 11TH MAY, 1945” were issued. When Iran restored central authority these stamps were withdrawn from usage.

And.....so you now know where in the world are Afas and Issas, Venda and Azerbaijan!