

COINS FOR YOU

*A starting guide for
new collectors*



UNITED STATES MINT

**Connecting America
through Coins**

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF COIN COLLECTING!

Coins reflect our culture. The symbols, inscriptions, and images depicted on our coins express our shared values and history.

Collecting coins is like collecting stories. And, as a new numismatist ([new-mis-ma-tist](#)), you can be part of those stories.

As you read through this booklet, you'll learn about the fun hobby of coin collecting. In no time, you'll be striking up all kinds of "coin-versations" as your collection grows.

Happy Collecting!



ABOUT THE U.S. MINT



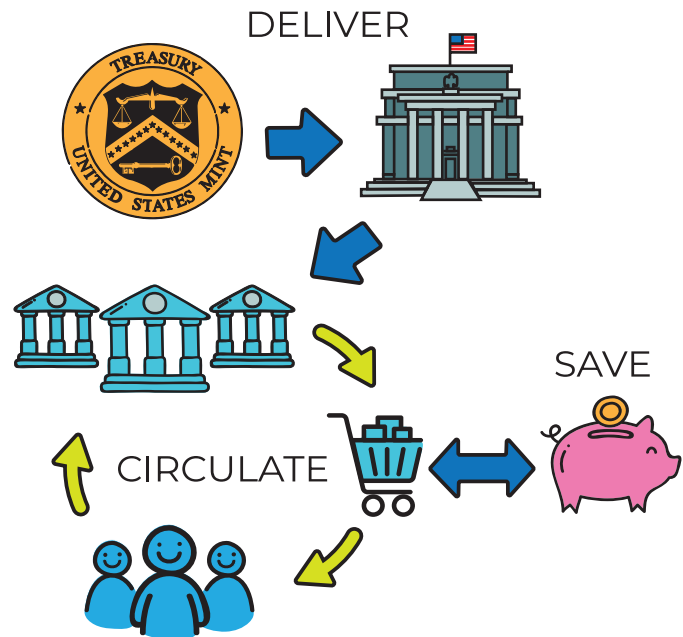
The United States Mint (Mint) is the government agency that makes coins. The Mint is responsible for producing circulating coins for Americans to conduct business every day. The Mint also makes numismatic coins for collecting, bullion coins for investing, and medals to honor important people and events.

The Mint delivers new coins to Federal Reserve Banks (Deliver). From there, the Federal Reserve Banks distribute new coins to local banks across the country that provide coins to stores and people who spend them (Circulate). For example, you use your coins to buy something from a store; the store takes your coins to the bank; the bank then gives the coins to another store, and so on. Saving your coins takes them out of circulation (Save).



DID YOU KNOW?

The Mint makes coins and medals. Paper money is made by our sister agency, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.



MINT HISTORY



DID YOU KNOW?

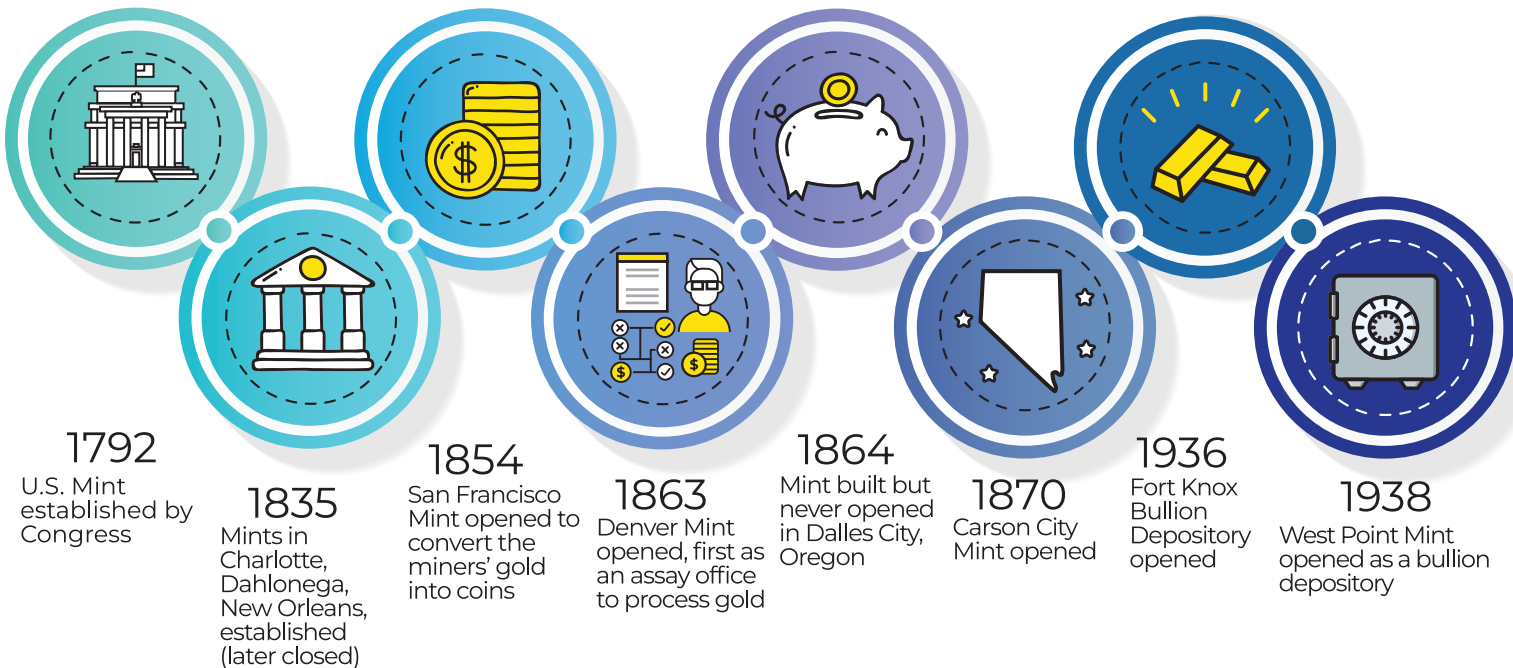
You can still find old and rare coins that have mint marks from former Mint facilities. In fact, the "D" mint mark that now stands for Denver used to represent the former Mint at Dahlonega, Georgia.



PHILADELPHIA

On April 2, 1792, Congress passed the Coinage Act establishing the first national Mint in the United States. Congress chose Philadelphia, then the nation's capital, as the site of our first Mint.

As the United States grew, Americans' need for coins grew with it. Also, discoveries of silver and gold in the 19th century prompted the government to open new Mint locations around the country. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the Mint currently operates production facilities in Denver, CO; Philadelphia, PA; San Francisco, CA; and West Point, NY, as well as a bullion depository at Fort Knox, KY.



MINT LOCATIONS

Today, the Mint has six locations across the United States. Each location has a different purpose.



DENVER

The U.S. Mint at Denver makes circulating and collectible coins. It also makes coin dies and stores gold and silver. The Denver Mint offers public tours.



SAN FRANCISCO

The U.S. Mint at San Francisco makes collectible coins. It has special robots that package the coins.



FORT KNOX

The U.S. Bullion Depository at Fort Knox doesn't make coins. It secures the Nation's gold.



WASHINGTON

The headquarters of the U.S. Mint is in Washington, DC. Although this location doesn't make coins, it is responsible for research, marketing, and other important business related to the Mint's operations.



PHILADELPHIA

The U.S. Mint at Philadelphia makes circulating and collectible coins, medals, and dies for both coins and medals. It is the largest mint in the world and also offers public tours.



WEST POINT

The U.S. Mint at West Point makes investment (bullion) and collectible coins. It also stores gold, silver, and other precious metals.

HISTORY OF COINS

In ancient times, people used metal for money before people used coins. During this time, the weight of a piece of metal determined its value. If you wanted to buy something, the seller would weigh the metal. The heavier your piece, the more you could buy.



Then, a clever person thought of stamping the piece's weight right onto the metal! In the mid-7th century B.C., people in Lydia (now part of Turkey) made coins from electrum, a natural metal that's made up of gold and silver. These coins also had symbols stamped onto them.



In the 6th century B.C. during the rule of King Croesus, Lydians learned to make gold coins. They discovered how to remove silver from the electrum, leaving just the gold. King Croesus' coins were an amazing 98 percent pure gold!



In 2nd century B.C. Ptolemy I of Egypt was the first Western leader to have his own image put on coins. Many countries still put leaders on their coins today.

SYMBOLS ON OUR COINS

Our early modern coins are full of symbolism. Many symbols have ancient Greek and Roman origins and were widely used in the 18th and 19th centuries.



LIBERTY CAP

Liberty/Freedom: Cap given to freed Roman slaves



CAP WITH WINGS

Freedom of thought



WREATH

Victory



UNION SHIELD

From the Great Seal: Represents Congress and the 13 original colonies



STARS

States: Stars and clouds together symbolize America as a new nation



OAK BRANCH

Strength and independence



OLIVE BRANCH

Peace



ARROWS

War



TORCH

Liberty



FASCES

Strength through unity: Roman symbol of wood rods tied around an axe



BALD EAGLE

National Bird of the United States.



E PLURIBUS UNUM

National motto: Latin for "Out of Many, One"

2026 Semiquincentennial Coin Program



The 2026 Semiquincentennial Coin Program celebrates the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States (1776-2026). In 2026, the Mint is updating well-known coinage with special privy marks, dual dates, and design changes to depict the story of America's journey toward a 'more perfect union,' and celebrate defining ideals of liberty.

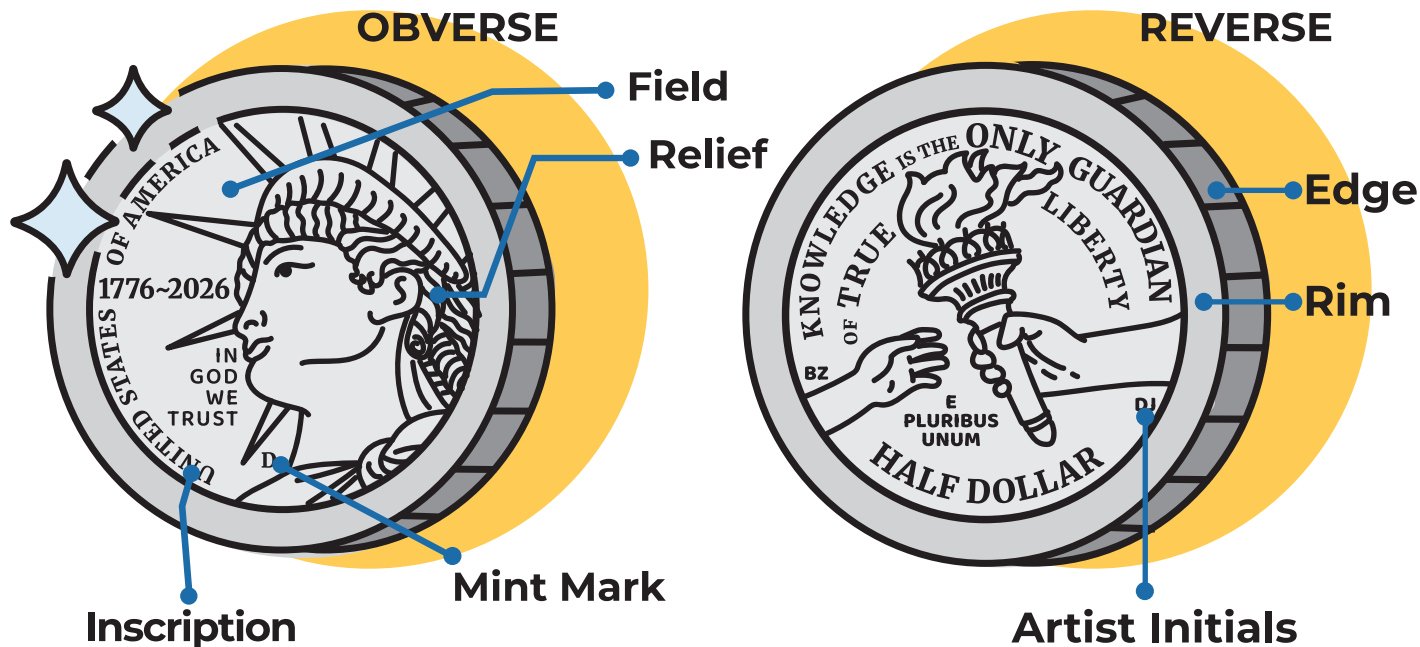


SCAN ME!



Learn more about the Mint's coin programs on our website.

PARTS OF A COIN



Plain Edge

E PLURIBUS UNUM

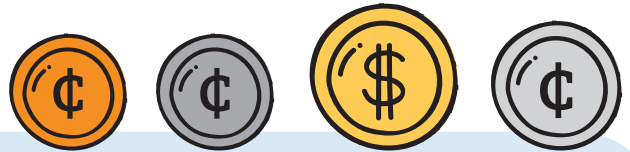
Lettered Edge

A coin's edge can be plain, reeded, lettered, or decorated.

Reeded Edge

Decorated Edge

COIN COLLECTING



People have collected coins for centuries. At first, only royalty and nobility collected coins. This gave coin collecting the nickname of "the hobby of kings."

In fact, the first known collector was a king: Augustus Caesar, the first emperor of Rome. He lived from 63 B.C. to 14 A.D.

Augustus collected many coins and gave coins as gifts. Many of the Roman emperors who ruled after Augustus also had large collections. Rich and royal families continued this tradition throughout the Middle Ages.

Coin collecting became a popular hobby in America in the 1800s. Since then, more and more people have enjoyed collecting coins, no matter their age or income. After all, coins are all around us!



DID YOU KNOW?

The most expensive coin ever sold is the 1933 Double Eagle, which sold at an auction in 2021 for \$18.9 million.



GET STARTED COLLECTING COINS

Gather Materials to Care for Your Collection



Soft cotton gloves
to hold your coins



Soft towel or pad
to hold coins over
when viewing



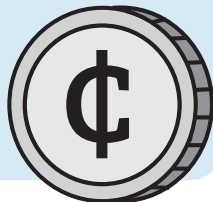
Magnifying glass
to study your coins



Coin holders or
albums for storing
coins

**You can collect all kinds of coins
for a variety of reasons. Coins
can:**

- Help you remember a place you traveled
- Have interesting designs
- Be old or brand new
- Evoke different emotions



DID YOU KNOW?

A person who collects coins is called a numismatist. Numismatics is the study and collecting of things that are used as money, including coins, tokens, and paper bills.

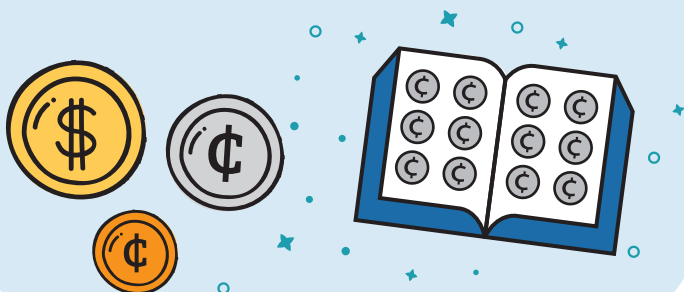
BUILD A COLLECTION



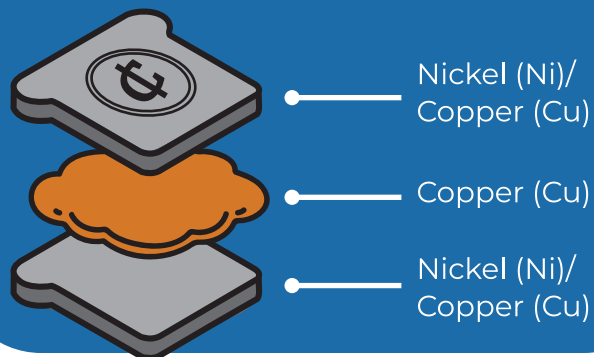
It's easy to start a coin collection. You can begin with coins that you already have.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Gather your coins and store them safely in protective holders or albums.
- Keep a list of your coins. Include the coin type, year, and other information you find useful.
- Add to your collection by searching for coins at coin shows, auctions, or flea markets. And always check your change for coins that fit your collecting theme.

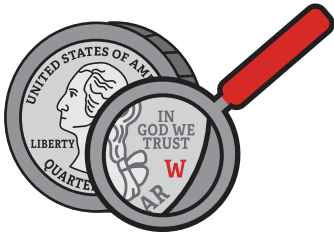


Coins today are made of different types of metal. Before 1965, many circulating coins were made of silver. Since 1965, most coins are clad, meaning they have a core and outer layer made of different metals. You can actually see the layers when you look at the edge of a quarter or a dime – the copper peeks out through the nickel sandwich.



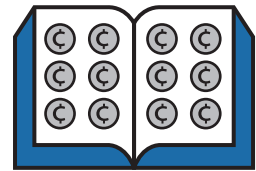
GROW YOUR COLLECTION

All coins have a story to tell. Some markings or parts of your coin might make for a more exciting and unique story. When you are thinking about adding a new coin to your collection, here are a few things to look for:



Unique or rare mint marks. For example, the West Point Mint, which doesn't usually make circulating coins, produced special "W" quarters in 2019 and 2020.

Precious metal coins. The U.S. Mint produces precious metal coins in gold, silver, platinum, and palladium for collectors and investors. Every precious metal coin is backed by the U.S. Government, ensuring exceptional purity and craftsmanship. The proof and uncirculated versions are minted for collecting while bullion coins offer a way to invest in precious metals.



Complete sets of a particular coin type or coin program. Creating a complete set of one coin type or program can make your collection more valuable, and it also gives you a collecting goal.



Age. Ancient or older coins can be more expensive because they have had to survive over a long period of time. For example, a 1652 silver shilling made in the Massachusetts Bay Colony sold for over \$350,000 in 2021.

Special finishes. Some coins are produced with unique coin finishes such as proof or reverse proof coins. The proof coins have a mirror-like background and frosted image and the reverse proof has a frosted background and proof image.

Limited edition release coins. During 1943, the Mint made steel pennies as a way to save copper during World War II.



Error coins. Errors were more common in the past before modern machinery. If you find a coin with a mistake, it can be worth quite a lot! In 2018, a \$1 coin stamped with a quarter design sold at auction for nearly \$200,000.



LEARN MORE



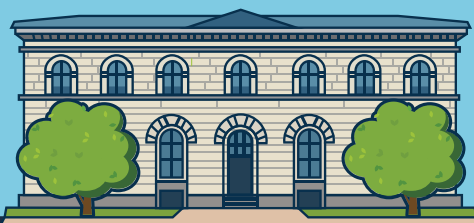
Visit the U.S. Mint website to discover more about coins, Mint history, watch videos, and stay up to date with the latest Mint news.



At the U.S. Mint Coin Classroom, you can find resources for teaching with coins, at-home activities, games, and videos!



If you have questions or want more information not found on our website, email us at education.outreach@usmint.treas.gov.



Denver Mint



Philadelphia Mint

The U.S. Mint offers in-person tours of the Denver and Philadelphia Mint facilities where visitors can learn about coin production from the minting process to the striking of the coins.

