

Interesting Facts about Pennies

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Pennies have been around for more than 200 years. The penny was created in 1787. There have been 11 designs for pennies since then,

The first penny was 100% copper. Paul Revere supplied some of the copper used to make the first pennies.

Now the penny is 2.4% copper and 97.6% zinc. During World War II there was a shortage of copper, so in 1943 they made steel pennies coated with zinc.

Look at some pennies. What year were they minted (made)?

Pennies are made at the Denver mint and Philadelphia mint.

Look at the front of a penny. "D" stands for Denver. "P" stands for Philadelphia,

The government makes money from pennies. It costs .8¢ to make a penny.

In 2002, they made 7,288,855,000 pennies. The government made over 14 million dollars from selling pennies.

Abraham Lincoln appeared on the penny in 1909, the 100th anniversary of his birthday! Abraham Lincoln was the first president to appear on any coin.

Notice how Lincoln faces to the right. On other coins, the presidents face left.

The Lincoln Memorial, a building in Washington DC, was added to the back of the penny in 1959, for Lincoln's 150th birthday. Mr. Frank Gasparro created the design for the back of the penny. His tiny initials appear on the right, next to the shrubbery.

Can you find the initials "FG" on the back of the penny?

Abraham Lincoln is the only president on the front AND back of a coin,
Do you see Abraham Lincoln sitting inside the Lincoln Memorial?

Some special pennies to collect:

- 1793 Only four are known to exist. They are worth \$275,000 each!
- 1856 The flying eagle penny
- 1859 The Indian penny

"Wheat" pennies were made until 1959, when the Lincoln Memorial was introduced.

Other interesting facts about pennies:

- 1936 Bass shoe company introduced "the penny loafer"
- 1936 Bing Crosby recorded "Pennies from Heaven" (It won an Oscar,)
- 1898-1951 there were "penny postcards." It cost 1¢ to mail a postcard.

Can you find the name of our country, "United States of America"?

Can you find the national motto, "E Pluribus Unum?" This is Latin for "out of the many, one." It refers to the idea that there are many states but one country.

Can you find "In God We Trust"? It first appeared in 1909, on the Lincoln penny.

What can you use to clean up your pennies? (Salt and vinegar. Try it!)

Interesting Facts about Nickels

The Indian-Head Nickel, or Buffalo Nickel (1913-1938)

This nickel had a Native American on the front, a composite drawing of 3 different Indian chiefs. On the back was a buffalo. (In 1937 they accidentally minted a nickel that had a buffalo with 3 legs. A “3-Legged” nickel in mint condition is very valuable.)

The Jefferson Nickel (1938-2004)

The front of the nickel has a picture of Thomas Jefferson, the writer of the Declaration of Independence and third president of the United States. On the back is a picture of his home in Virginia, called “Monticello.” See if you can find Monticello with 5 or 6 well-defined steps.

The Jefferson nickel was designed by Felix Schlag – His initials were added to the nickel in 1966. **Can you find his initials?**

Originally, all 3 mints made nickels (Philadelphia, Denver, and San Francisco). San Francisco stopped making them after 1970. Originally the mint mark was on the back of the nickel, now it is on the front. **Where was your nickel minted?**

Wartime Nickels (1942-1945)

For a short time, nickels were made with copper, silver and manganese. The silver tarnished so these coins are often darker in color. Frequently the date is worn off.

Counterfeit Nickels (1954)

A counterfeiter in NJ made a lot of counterfeits, with dates on them of 1944, 1939, 1946, 1947 and 1953. Before he was caught, he dumped 200,000 of them in Copper Creek, NJ and they think he dumped another 200,000 in the Schuylkill River. About 100,000 of these nickels are still in circulation, so see if you can find one!

Westward Journey Series (2004-2005)

While Thomas Jefferson was president, we purchased “Louisiana” (about 1/3 of the U.S.) and Lewis and Clark set out to explore the “Louisiana Territory.” These coins commemorate this period of Westward Expansion of the United States.

2004: The old Jefferson is on the front, but there are two different designs on the back:

- A design similar to the Indian Peace Medal made for Lewis and Clark
- Lewis and Clark’s keelboat that they used to travel on the rivers. Lewis and Clark are standing in the bow of the boat (up front).

2005: A new “modern” Jefferson is on the front. Next to his portrait is the word “Liberty” - in his own handwriting! Two different designs are on the back:

- A buffalo on the back to remind people about all the buffalo that were killed after the transcontinental railroad was built across the country.
- Clark’s words on reaching the Pacific Ocean: “Ocean in view! O! The Joy!”

Front-Facing Jefferson Nickels (2006-2009)

The new Jefferson is facing front,. This is the only coin where a president is facing front, The word “Liberty” appears as in 2005, in Jefferson’s own handwriting!

Can you find the name of our country, “United States of America”?

Can you find the national motto, “E Pluribus Unum?”

Can you find “In God We Trust”?

Interesting Facts about Dimes

The “Mercury” Dime (1916-1945)

This is actually the “Winged Liberty Head” dime. It is frequently referred to as the “Mercury” dime because people thought it was the Roman god Mercury. But it is actually “Lady Liberty” (as on the Statue of Liberty).

The Roosevelt Dime (since 1946)

President Franklin Roosevelt was the 32nd president of the United States and the only president to serve four terms. For most of his adult life he was paralyzed from the waist down and had to use a wheelchair. He died in April 1945 and this coin was introduced in 1946. They chose to put him on the dime because of his work with the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, unofficially known as “The March of Dimes.” (This is now the official name of the organization, dedicated to fighting childhood diseases.)

On the back of the dime are a torch, an olive branch, and an oak branch.

The **torch** stands for knowledge.

The **olive branch** stands for peace.

The **oak branch** stands for strength.

A dime has 118 ridges along the outside. Nickels and pennies have no ridges. Ridges help blind people identify the coins.

From 1837-1966 dimes were 90% silver and 10% copper. (The “silver” dimes made in 1965 and 1966 say “1964” because they didn’t want people to hoard them.) The new dimes that say 1965 and later are made of copper and nickel.

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Can you find the national motto, “E Pluribus Unum?”

Can you find “In God We Trust”?