

Becoming a coin collector

Have you ever thought about becoming a numismatist? Maybe not! How about a coin collector? Fantastic! Well, the first thing you should know is that a 'numismatist' and a 'coin collector' are exactly the same thing.

Coin collecting is a very old hobby which people do for many different reasons. Some people really love the artwork on coins. Others are interested in the history behind the coins. Then there are those who would simply like to have an investment which may be worth a lot of money in the future. Whatever your reason might be, it's very easy to start a coin collection with an ever growing number of coins to find.

Getting started – collecting circulating coins

The easiest way to get started is to look at the coins you find in your change. These are called 'circulating coins' because they are used around the country every day. Circulating coins are made in our presses at a rapid rate – an amazing 650 coins are made per minute so that there are always enough for people to use.

When you look at the coins you receive in your change, you might see pictures of Australia's unique wildlife, or of an Aboriginal elder on the \$2 coin. You might also find a new coin that is clean and shiny because it hasn't been touched by many people yet. Or, you might find a coin from years ago and think about how many hands, pockets, purses or cash registers it has been in.

When rummaging through your change, have you ever come across a coin with an interesting picture that you haven't seen before? These unique coins are called 'commemorative coins'. When Australia is celebrating a special event, the Royal Australian Mint will put a picture relating to that event on the coin's reverse side. If you find any of these coins, add them to your coin collecting album and it will be overflowing in no time!

To start a collection of commemorative coins, pay special attention to the 20c, 50c and \$1 coins, which have had many different designs over the years. Since 2012, we have also been making a limited number of coloured commemorative \$2 coins. A list of commemorative coins can be found on the Mint website (www.ramint.gov.au).



Examples of commemorative circulating coins

Getting more serious – collecting uncirculated coins

So, you've been checking your change for months, you've got circulating coins from many different years and a whole range of commemorative coins. Now you're looking for something even more special... Uncirculated coins might be just what you need!

These are coins that you will not find in your change, but you can buy from the Mint. They are polished and struck harder than everyday coins which makes them clearer and shinier. They often have pictures you won't see on circulating coins and come in special packaging so that they stay in good condition and stand apart from other coins.

For something even more exciting, you can even strike (make) your own uncirculated coin. If you are lucky enough to visit the Mint, you can make your own coin in the visitor press (for a cost of \$3). Every year, this machine makes a new coin design that you can't get anywhere else. We also have a travelling press which visits Royal Shows and special events at cities across the country. Keep an eye out for it!



2016 uncirculated year set

Collecting something REALLY special – proof coins

For the truly dedicated collector, we also make proof coins. These are very special coins, often made of precious metals like silver and gold. Sometimes they come in a range of different shapes and sizes, and are specially struck by expert coin-makers.

Each coin is struck at least four times and inspected for quality. A fingerprint or a speck of dust will be enough for a proof coin to be rejected.

Proof coins can be expensive, so you'll need to save up to buy one. You could also let your family or adult friends know how great it would be to give you a special coin for a birthday or Christmas present.



Examples of proof coins

Which coin is which?

	<p>Circulating coin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struck once• Made 650 per minute• Has a small amount of polishing• Has a rounded rim (edge)
	<p>Uncirculated coin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struck once• Made 80 per minute• More polished than circulating coins• Has a sharper rim (edge) than circulating coins
	<p>Proof coin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struck at least four times• Individually made• Has a highly-polished background and a frosted image• Has a very distinctive rim