

# UNITED STATES MINT AT *Philadelphia*



*A Handbook to the  
Self-Guided Tour of the  
United States Mint*



**UNITED STATES MINT**

# WELCOME TO THE UNITED STATES MINT AT PHILADELPHIA



You are standing in the largest coin factory in the world – The United States Mint at Philadelphia! Many of the coins you use every day are made right here!

The United States Mint was established in Philadelphia in 1792, and coins have been continuously struck here for over 200 years. The United States Mint is the nation’s sole manufacturer of legal tender coinage. In addition to circulating coins, the United States Mint also produces numismatic products at four manufacturing sites across the country. Numismatic products include commemorative coins; proof and uncirculated coins; silver, gold and platinum bullion coins; and Congressional Gold Medals. The United States Mint is also responsible for protecting our nation’s gold and silver reserves.



During your self-guided tour of the Philadelphia facility, you will learn about our extraordinary history and see our current coin design and manufacturing processes. Our exhibits, artifacts and David Rittenhouse Theater will highlight coin making at the first United States Mint in colonial Philadelphia. Our interactive displays, videos and our very own skilled and proud staff will demonstrate how today’s coins are safely and efficiently made in the world’s largest mint.

We hope this brochure is not only helpful as you proceed through the public tour areas but also educational and informative.

# LOBBY

## *Let's Begin!*

Start your tour by using the **Tour Map** near the up escalator. There are several distinct areas for you to explore: The **Lobby** (first floor), the **Mezzanine and David Rittenhouse Theater** (second floor or “NR” on the elevator), and the **Gallery** (third floor or “VG” on the elevator). Finish your tour with a visit to our **Gift Shop**, where you can purchase mementos of your time spent here and perhaps begin your very own coin collection.

*The seven Tiffany glass mosaics displayed on the lobby walls were originally commissioned to celebrate the opening of third United States Mint building in Philadelphia in 1901. The mosaics, designed and created by the famous Tiffany Studios of New York City, are made of iridescent glass and mother-of-pearl backed with metallic leaf. The cherubic children illustrate the ancient Roman coin making. The mosaics are truly a national treasure!*



**Fast Fact:** Did you know that the United States Mint has its very own police force? Well, we do! And it's one of the oldest federal police forces in the nation. United States Mint police officers are responsible for protecting over \$100 billion in Treasury and government assets, including the gold supply at Fort Knox.

Before you leave the lobby, be sure to visit the Collector's Corner. Marvel at some of the most beautiful coins ever created by the United States Mint. This special collection includes examples of our nation's gold, commemorative, bullion and special issue coins.

When you visit the mezzanine on the second floor, you will learn more about the history of the Mint and how coins were first made in Philadelphia 200 years ago!



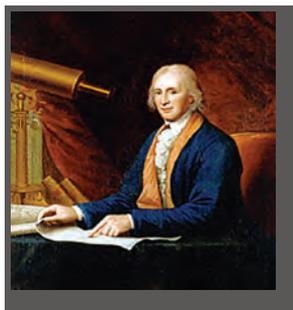
## MEZZANINE

### *History In Your Pocket*

While you wait to begin your Mint history lesson with our Founding Fathers in the **David Rittenhouse Theater**, reach into your pocket and pull out a coin. Can you match the coin's date to a year in American history on the **History In Your Pocket** timeline? This is a fun way to make history come alive and to see how coins have become part of our national heritage. Even if you don't have a coin, we think you'll find this timeline quite interesting!

### *Step Back in Time*

Enter the **David Rittenhouse Theater** and travel back to colonial Philadelphia when this city was our nation's capital and George Washington was our President. It was a busy Monday in the new nation's largest city, when finally, after a decade of debate, on April 2, 1792, Congress passed the Coinage Act. The act provided for a national coinage system and the establishment of the United States Mint. President Washington appointed David Rittenhouse, Philadelphia's world-renowned scientist and astronomer, to be the first Director of the Mint. Establishing the Mint, erecting its first home and creating its initial regulations and coining processes were monumental tasks. But Rittenhouse and his dedicated staff proudly accepted the challenge and carefully laid the groundwork for today's United States Mint to be the world leader in coin design and manufacturing.



David Rittenhouse  
First Director of the Mint



### *The Many United States Mints – Our History – Our Heritage*

Learn about the rich history of the United States Mint, its distinct facilities and how coins help to make up the financial fabric of our nation – Connecting America through Coins. On display throughout the mezzanine are some of the oldest and rarest numismatic artifacts of our time.

**Fast Fact:** The first Mint facility was erected at 7th and Arch Streets, only 100 yards from where you're standing today. As the young nation grew, so did the demand for coins and the Mint quickly outgrew its original home. The current Mint, which opened on August 14, 1969, is the fourth in Philadelphia and is the largest, safest and most efficient Mint in the world!



Edward Lamasure's painting  
"Ye Olde Mint"

The United States Mint is an agency within the United States Department of the Treasury. The United States Mint operates six facilities across the nation, each performing unique functions. Current facilities include the headquarters in Washington, DC; circulating and numismatic coin production facilities in Philadelphia, PA and Denver, CO; numismatic and bullion coin production facilities in West Point, NY and San Francisco, CA; and the United States Bullion Depository at Fort Knox, KY.



The first Mint building later became a shop for wall paper, umbrellas and cigars. Photo c. 1908

Your next stop is **The Gallery (third floor)** where you will see how coins are made - from an idea to legal tender.

# THE GALLERY

Our interactive, self-guided tour has been divided into color-coded areas to help you better understand the coin and medal making – or minting – process. At the start of the Gallery, look for a key with special images and colors to help you distinguish the different coin design and manufacturing areas.

**You are about to see how coins are made right here in this facility.**

**FACTORY TOUR**

-  **ART**  
Artistic design is the first step in the coinage process.
-  **DIE MAKING**  
The die shop makes the tools that strike the coins.
-  **BLANKING**  
In this department, round blanks are punched out of metal strips using extreme force.
-  **ANNEALING & UPSETTING**  
This is where the blanks are prepared for striking.
-  **STRIKING**  
Striking is where the design is added to the planchet.
-  **INSPECTING**  
After striking, each batch of coins is inspected to see if it meets United States Mint quality standards.
-  **BAGGING**  
The finished coins are packaged for their journey to the Federal Reserve Banks.



## ART – The striking of a coin begins with artistry and design.

The coins you use every day are little pieces of history in your pocket, and they are also tiny works of art, carefully designed and sculpted by skilled artists. Elected and appointed officials, artists and members of the public provide input for coin designs and participate on coin design committees. But did you know that it takes an official act of Congress to create a coin? Here you will learn how coin legislation becomes a coin design and a coin design becomes an actual coin. It's intricate work – but well worth the effort!



**Fast Fact:** Current law mandates the following inscriptions appear on all circulating coins: “Liberty,” “In God We Trust,” “United States of America,” and “E Pluribus Unum,” as well as each coin’s denomination and the year of issuance.



## DIE MAKING – THE DIE SHOP MAKES THE TOOLS THAT STRIKE THE COINS.



The die shop is where the tools that make the coins are cut, squeezed and shaped to perfection. Thousands of dies are created each year with painstaking precision. Each die is exactly alike. In this section we will show you how we create thousands of working dies which strike millions of coins. Making perfect dies can be a complex process, but it's necessary as every coin must be perfect or they won't be accepted by vending machines. Plus every employee has pride in producing only the best quality coins for our nation!



**BLANKING** – In this department, round blanks are punched out of metal strips using extreme force.

You are now 40 feet above the factory floor! Let's see how we make millions of coins every day! The United States Mint buys strips of metal made of copper and nickel which are about 13 inches wide and 1500 feet long – the length of five football fields!



The metal arrives as a giant coil that weighs about 6000 pounds. The metal is fed through a blanking press, which is like a giant cookie-cutter, and punches out round, plain-surfaced disks called blanks. The leftover strip, called webbing, is chopped and recycled. Penny blanks come ready-made.

**ANNEALING & UPSETTING** – This is where the blanks are prepared for striking.



The blanks are heated in an annealing furnace to soften the metal of the blank. They are then poured through a huge washer and dryer. Finally, the shiny blanks are rolled through an upsetting mill. The mill raises a smooth, hard edge around each blank. This rim helps with the striking process and also allows you to stack your coins. After spinning out of the upsetting mill, the blank is called a planchet.





**STRIKING** – Striking is where the design is added to the planchet.

Two dies – obverse and reverse – or heads and tails – are placed into the coining press. The planchets travel to the presses on an automated conveyor. And with one mighty strike, the designs from the steel dies are transferred to the planchet creating a genuine United States coin – still warm to the touch!



**INSPECTING** – This is where every coin must be in “mint condition.”



After striking, press operators use magnifying glasses to spot-check each batch of new coins to be sure that they meet the Mint’s strict quality standards. If a flaw is spotted, all of the coins in the trap are scrapped and sent to a coin destruction machine called a waffler. All materials are recycled.



**BAGGING** – The finished coins are bagged for their journey to the Federal Reserve Banks and into your pocket!



After the coins have been inspected, they travel to the automated counting machines. All coins, except for cents, are counted and poured into giant bulk bags. The filled bags are weighed – each bag weighs over one ton – sealed shut, loaded onto pallets and taken by forklift to the Mint’s vaults. New coins are shipped to Federal Reserve Banks across the nation. From there, the coins go to your local bank!

**Fast Fact:** Pennies are not individually counted by the United States Mint. They are bagged and shipped by weight.

## MEDALS AND COMMEMORATIVE COINS

Making numismatic products such as commemorative coins and national medals is similar to making circulating coins. However, each piece gets special care and handling.

As authorized by Congress, the United States Mint strikes Congressional Gold Medals to honor those whose outstanding achievements have enriched mankind or to commemorate significant events, sites and organizations. The Congressional Gold Medal is presented to the individual. Bronze replicas are struck for collectors.



See the people and events that have shaped our history and future, and study the beautiful artwork that highlights their triumphs. Indian Peace Medals, Presidential Medals and national medals were all struck at the United States Mint at Philadelphia.

**Fast Fact:** Did you know that medals spin but coins flip? To view the front and back of a medal design, rotate it from side to side. A medal is often suspended on a ribbon and placed on a recipient's neck, and it makes sense to view the obverse and reverse images by turning the medal from side to side. To view the designs of a coin, rotate it from top to bottom.



Women's Airforce  
Service Pilots Medal



Navajo Code Talkers  
Medal



Tuskegee Airmen  
Medal

## RECYCLING

The United States Mint has been “green” for over two centuries! Since 1792, all excess metal used in the making of coins has been recycled. Even the webbing leftover from blanking is shredded and returned to the metal strip manufacturer to be recycled.



Flawed coins and blanks are also recycled. They are crushed between two high pressure rollers which impress a ridged pattern into the metal. “Waffled” pieces don’t have a denomination value and can be returned to the manufacturer for recycling without a United States Mint Police escort.

## GIFT SHOP

Located in the lobby of the building, the gift shop offers United States Mint coin sets, commemorative coins, numismatic collectables, books, games and United States Mint souvenirs. The telephone number for the gift shop is 215-408-0230.

## TOURS

All tours are free and self-guided; no reservations are necessary, even for large groups.

- Visiting hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. The United States Mint offers weekend and holiday hours during the summer; please call 215-408-0112 for summer tour information.
- Photography, smoking, eating and drinking are prohibited on the tour route. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, weapons and large packages.
- All visitors are required to enter through a metal detector. For more information, please call 215-408-0112.

## SPECIAL NEEDS

The United States Mint provides access for people with disabilities. Please indicate any special needs upon arrival or in advance by calling (215) 408-0110.

United States Mint  
5th and Arch Streets  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1886

- For more information, please visit our website at [www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov).
- To subscribe to United States Mint electronic product notifications, visit <http://www.usmint.gov/email/?action=newsletters>.
- Sign up for RSS Feeds from the United States Mint and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



Thank you for visiting the United States Mint at Philadelphia! We hope you enjoyed your stay!

# JULY 4,



[www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov)

1-800-USA-MINT (872-6468)

## Hours of Operation

**Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Open Saturdays and holidays during the summer.  
Please call 215-408-0112 for specific  
summer/holiday tour information.**

*Connecting America through Coins*