

Find A Rarity

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Rare coins need not be expensive. If you take an active interest in numismatics, chances are good that you can add several rarities to your collection.

The price of a coin depends on both its supply and its demand. Most American collectors collect American money. The Morgan Dollar and the Indianhead cent are perfect examples of coins whose populations run into the hundred millions and whose prices are driven by high public demand.

A rare coin, token, or banknote that doesn't capture the public fancy will be more modestly priced. From 1854 to 1857, the Bank of Upper Canada struck large penny and half-penny tokens. The total population for these coins is less than 6 million, yet they cost only a few dollars each, even in the highest grades.

Whether you delve into Chinese banknotes or even into local issues from your town or state, you stand a good chance of really discovering rarities that are not listed in the catalogs. From wildcat banks to failed attempts at seizing the crown of a small country, history provides many examples of short-lived coins and banknotes with small populations. Korean cash coins, coal mine tokens from Kentucky, and school board scrip from Michigan are all examples of money that is known to have many unidentified types and varieties.

Will your new treasure make you rich? Not likely -- price is, after all the result of both supply and demand -- but you will enjoy the thrill of owning something rare, something not listed in a book or catalog.