

US BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HALF DOLLAR

1948-1963



Diameter: 30.6 mm

Weight: 192.9 grains (12.5 grams)

Composition: 90% silver - 10% copper

Designer: John R. Sinnock

Engraver: Charles E. Barber

Mint Marks: Philadelphia (none) Denver (D)
San Francisco (S) - found above Liberty Bell on
reverse

Obverse: Head and shoulders portrait of
Franklin facing right with LIBERTY above and IN
GOD WE TRUST below. The date is to the right.

Reverse: Liberty Bell (similar to that used by
Sinnock on the 1926 Sesquicentennial Half Dollar
modeled from a sketch by John Frederick Lewis)
with UNITED STATES OF AMERICA above and
HALF DOLLAR below. The motto E PLURIBUS
UNUM is to the left with a small eagle to the
right.

Edge: Reeded

This design was the final work of John R. Sinnock, mint engraver, who also designed the long running Roosevelt Dime as well as the Sesquicentennial Half Dollar and \$2.50 Gold Commemoratives. The obverse and reverse models of the Benjamin Franklin Half were completed only a few weeks before his death in May of 1947.

The new design was rejected by the Federal Fine Arts Commission. They based their disapproval on the small cage used on the reverse (included only because it was required by law since 1792) and the obvious crack in The Liberty Bell (for they feared it would draw "cracks" about United States coinage).

The Treasury, however, approved the design over the Commission's objections and production of business strikes began on April 30, 1948. Proof specimens were struck at the Philadelphia Mint from 1950 through 1963.

While still an affordable series for most collectors, finding boldly struck specimens can be surprisingly difficult with certain issues being truly scarce.

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