

# Austrian Silver Commemorative 25 Schilling Coins

## Overview

Austria has a long and distinguished tradition of issuing beautifully crafted commemorative coins, and the silver 25 schilling series stands as one of the most celebrated examples of this heritage. Spanning several decades and two distinct eras, these coins were struck by the Münze Österreich (Austrian Mint) in Vienna and are prized by numismatists worldwide for their artistic quality, historical subject matter, and silver content.

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## Historical Context

The Austrian schilling served as the nation's currency from 1925 to 1938, was abolished following Germany's annexation of Austria, and was reintroduced after World War II in 1945. The Second Republic's currency stabilized during the 1950s, and the commemorative coin program that followed became an important cultural tradition. The 25 schilling denomination occupied a distinctive place in this program — substantial enough to carry meaningful silver content, yet accessible to a broad base of collectors.

Austria ultimately adopted the euro as its official currency on January 1, 1999, with schilling coins and notes phased out of circulation by February 28, 2002. However, schilling-denominated coins that were valid at the time of the euro's introduction remain indefinitely exchangeable at branches of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank.

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## Two Distinct Eras

### The First Republic Era (1926–1934)

The earliest Austrian 25 schilling coins were struck during the First Republic, composed of 90% gold rather than silver. These are rare and numismatically significant pieces, with a total mintage of only approximately 1,045,000 across the entire production run from 1926 to 1934. Even fewer survive in collectible condition today, making them among the rarest historic European coin issues of the 20th century. These coins were notably produced with proof-like finishes — an expensive and uncommon practice for the era — giving surviving specimens a brilliant luster that endures to this day.

### The Second Republic Commemorative Series (1955–1973)

The silver 25 schilling commemorative series that most collectors associate with the denomination was issued during the Second Republic, running from 1955 through 1973. This

series comprises 19 individual issues, each celebrating a distinct theme in Austrian history, culture, science, or architecture.

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## Physical Specifications

Attribute	Detail
Denomination	25 Schilling
Composition	80% silver (800 fineness)
Weight	13.00 grams
Fine Silver Content	10.40 grams (0.334 troy oz)
Diameter	30.00 mm
Minting Facility	Austrian Mint (Münze Österreich), Vienna
Production Period	1955–1973
Total Issues	19 commemorative types

The reverse of coins in this series typically depicts the denomination within a beaded circle, surrounded by the nine heraldic shields of the Austrian provinces, with small decorative sprays below — a classic Austrian design motif used across multiple commemorative denominations of the period.

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## The Complete Series (1955–1973)

Year	Subject
1955	Re-establishment of the Austrian State (State Treaty)
1956	200th Anniversary of the Birth of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
1957	800th Anniversary of the Mariazell Basilica
1958	100th Anniversary of the Birth of Carl Auer von Welsbach (chemist)
1959	100th Anniversary of the Death of Archduke Johann

Year	Subject
1960	40th Anniversary of the Carinthia Plebiscite
1961	Vienna Stock Exchange (Wiener Börse)
1962	Anton Bruckner (composer)
1963	(commemorative issue)
1964	Franz Grillparzer (writer)
1965	National Theater (Burgtheater)
1966	(commemorative issue)
1967	(commemorative issue)
1968	300th Anniversary of the Birth of Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt (architect)
1969	Peter Rosegger (author)
1970	(commemorative issue)
1971	(commemorative issue)
1972	100th Anniversary of the Death of Carl Michael Ziehrer (composer)
1973	100th Anniversary of the Birth of Max Reinhardt (theater director)

## Themes and Subject Matter

The 25 schilling series drew broadly from Austria's rich cultural heritage, honoring figures and milestones across several categories:

**Music and the Arts.** Composers and musicians featured prominently, reflecting Austria's exceptional musical legacy. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Anton Bruckner, and Carl Michael Ziehrer all appeared on these coins, as did the legendary theater director Max Reinhardt.

**Literature and Letters.** The writer Franz Grillparzer, one of Austria's most celebrated dramatists, and the popular author Peter Rosegger were among the literary figures commemorated.

**Science and Industry.** Carl Auer von Welsbach, the Austrian chemist who invented the gas mantle and isolated several rare earth elements, was recognized on the 1958 issue.

**Architecture and Historic Institutions.** The 1965 coin honored the National Theater (Burgtheater), and the 1968 issue commemorated Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt, the Baroque architect responsible for the Belvedere Palace in Vienna and other iconic structures.

**Historical and Political Milestones.** The inaugural 1955 coin marked the Austrian State Treaty, which restored full Austrian sovereignty after a decade of Allied occupation — one of the most significant political events in modern Austrian history. The 1960 issue recalled the 1920 Carinthia plebiscite, through which residents of the region voted to remain part of Austria rather than join Yugoslavia.

**Religious Heritage.** The 1957 coin celebrated the 800th anniversary of the Mariazell Basilica, Austria's most important pilgrimage site.

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## Collectibility and Value

The 1955 issue — the first in the series and tied to the historic State Treaty — carries a premium among collectors and is considered the key date of the Second Republic series. In pristine, uncirculated condition it commands a higher premium than most other dates.

For most coins in the series, value is closely tied to the silver content (bullion value), with modest numismatic premiums added for coins in excellent, problem-free condition. The 0.334 troy ounces of fine silver per coin means current melt value tracks the silver spot price directly. Collectors are advised to watch for cleaned or damaged examples, which reduce both aesthetic and monetary value.

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## Place Within Austria's Broader Commemorative Program

The 25 schilling series existed alongside parallel commemorative denominations. The 50 schilling silver series ran from 1959 to 1973 at 90% silver fineness and 20 grams, followed by a reduced-silver version from 1974 to 1978. The 100 schilling silver series operated from 1974 to 1979, and the 500 schilling series from 1980 onward. Together, these programs form one of the most comprehensive and sustained commemorative coin programs in European numismatic history.

The 25 schilling denomination was retired in 1973 as the program shifted toward higher denominations, but the coins of this series remain a staple of collections focused on 20th-century European silver and Austrian cultural history.

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## Summary

The Austrian silver 25 schilling commemorative coins of 1955–1973 represent a carefully curated celebration of Austrian identity — its composers, writers, architects, scientists, and defining political moments. Struck in 80% silver by the historic Vienna Mint, they offer collectors a tangible link to postwar Austria's cultural renaissance. Whether collected for their silver content, their artistic design, or their historical resonance, these coins remain enduring artifacts of one of Europe's richest numismatic traditions.