

## Mineral Spotlight: Silver

This week's Mineral of the Week is...Silver! Silver is unique from some of the previous Minerals of the Week because it is a native element, which means it occurs in nature as a lone element—without being combined with others. While silver can be found in places across the world, Mexico is the leading producer. Because it's a valuable metal, silver has a rich mining history. Aside from Mexico, the town of Aspen, CO was founded by silver miners in 1878. Alaska and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan are other notable producers.

A majority of silver production is as a byproduct of refining other metals like lead and copper. In natural silver deposits, a scaly, dendritic, or massive habit is the most common form.

Silver has a plethora of uses and has been valued as early as 4000 BC, all the way to today. Ancient uses include decoration, jewelry, and coinage. Pure silver is typically too soft (2.5-3 Mohs hardness) to be durable enough to last, so it is often alloyed with other metals when durability matters. Some more recent uses of silver include production of photography film and in electrical circuit boards, due to its excellent conductivity.

This feature was created by curator Andrew Mulder and posted on Dice Museum social media on 01/24/2023

