

What is the dollar in the United States

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The word dollar appears two times in the Organic Constitution of the United States of America. The first is at Article I, Section 9, Clause 1:

“The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten **dollars** for each Person.”

The other is at Amendment VII:

“In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty **dollars** the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.”

The word dollar has a definite and fixed meaning. [\[Footnote 1\]](#) A dollar, as used in the Constitution, is a Spanish Milled dollar coin, or its equivalent, in coin form, containing 371.25 grains of fine silver.

The Continental Congress adopted the Spanish Milled dollar coin as the standard of value for the several States. On July 6, 1785, the Continental Congress unanimously “Resolved, That the money unit of the United States be one dollar.” [\[Footnote 2\]](#) The dollar, was determined on April 8, 1786, to be 375.64 grains of fine silver, equivalent to the current (new) Spanish Milled Dollar coin:

“ ... Congress by their Act of the 6th July last resolved, that the Money Unit of the United States should be a Dollar, but did not determine what number of Grains of Fine Silver should be a Dollar.

We have concluded that Congress by their Act aforesaid, intended the common Dollars that are Current in the United States, and we have made our calculations accordingly.

... The Money Unit or Dollar will contain three hundred and seventy five grains and sixty four hundredths of a Grain of fine Silver. A Dollar containing this number of Grains of fine Silver, will be worth as much as the New Spanish Dollars.”
30 [Journal of the Continental Congress](#), 162 thru 163.

(page 162) <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=030/lljc030.db&recNum=167&itemLink=r%3Fammem%2Fhlaw%3A%40field%28DOCID%2B%40lit%28jc0301%29%29%230300002&linkText=1>

(page 163) <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=030/lljc030.db&recNum=168&itemLink=r%3Fammem%2Fhlaw%3A%40field%28DOCID%2B%40lit%28jc0301%29%29%230300002&linkText=1>

Thus, on August 8, 1786 “the money Unit of the United States, being by the resolve of Congress of the 6th July, 1785, [to be] a dollar shall contain of fine silver, three hundred and seventy five grains and sixty-four hundreds of a grain.” 31 Journals of the Continental Congress, 503 thru 504.

(page 503) <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=031/lljc031.db&recNum=54&itemLink=r%3Fammem%2Fhlaw%3A%40field%28DOCID%2B%40lit%28jc0311%29%29%230310001&linkText=1>

(page 504) <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=031/lljc031.db&recNum=55&itemLink=r%3Fammem%2Fhlaw%3A%40field%28DOCID%2B%40lit%28jc0311%29%29%230310001&linkText=1>

After the adoption of the Constitution, Congress passed the *Coinage Act of 1792*. At Section 9 of the act, it states:

“DOLLARS OR UNITS – each to be of the value of a Spanish Milled dollar [coin] as the same is now current, and to contain three hundred and seventy-one grains and four sixteenth parts of a grain of pure **[Footnote 3]**, or four hundred and sixteen grains of standard silver.” **[Footnote 4]**

http://nesara.org/files/coinage_act_1792.pdf

Thus, a dollar in the United States is a Spanish Milled dollar coin, or its equivalent, in coin form, containing 371.25 grains of fine silver.

Footnotes:

1. Just like the word excises. The word excises appears in the Constitution of the United States of America, and is:

“ . . . The eighth section of the first article of the Constitution declares that ‘the Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and **excises**, to pay the debts and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.’ ***Excises are a species of tax consisting generally of duties laid upon the manufacture, sale, or consumption of commodities within the country, or upon certain callings or occupations, often taking the form of exactions for licenses to pursue them.***” Pollock v. Farmers’ Loan & Trust Company: 157 U.S. 429, at 592 (Opinion of Justice Field) (1895).

<http://books.google.com/books?id=D2sUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA592#v=onepage&q&f=false>

2. 29 Journals of the Continental Congress, 499 thru 500.

(page 499) <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=029/lljc029.db&recNum=10&itemLink=r%3Fammem%2Fhlaw%3A%40field%28DOCID%2B%40lit%28jc0291%29%29%230290002&linkText=1>

(page 500) <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=029/lljc029.db&recNum=11&itemLink=r%3Fammem%2Fhlaw%3A%40field%28DOCID%2B%40lit%28jc0291%29%29%230290002&linkText=1>

3. The value of the dollar; that is the Spanish Milled dollar coin, was diminished before the adoption of the Constitution. In Hamilton’s report “on the Establishment of a Mint”, dated January 28, 1791, Alexander Hamilton writes:

“ . . . The dollar originally contemplated in the money transactions of this country, by successive diminutions of its weight and fineness, has sustained a depreciation of five per cent.; and yet the new dollar has a currency, in all payments in place of the old, with scarcely any attention to the difference between them. The operation of this in depreciating the value of property depending upon past contracts, and (as far as inattention to the alteration in the coin may be supposed to leave prices stationary) of all other property, is apparent. Nor can it require

argument to prove that a nation ought not to suffer the value of the property of its citizens to fluctuate with the fluctuations of a foreign mint, and to change with the changes in the regulations of a foreign sovereign. This, nevertheless, is the condition of one which, having no coins of its own, adopts with implicit confidence those of other countries. . . .

A prerequisite to determining with propriety what ought to be the money unit of the United States, is to endeavor to form as accurate an idea as the nature of the case will admit of what it actually is. . . . There being no formal regulation on the point, (the resolutions of Congress of the 6th of July, 1785, and 8th of August, 1786, having never yet been carried into operation,) it can only be inferred from usage or practice.” “Report on the Establishment of a Mint”, January 28, 1791, pages 134, 135

<http://books.google.com/books?id=HyQWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA134#v=onepage&q&f=false>

4. “By the [Coinage] act of 1792, (2 Laws U.S. 263, sect. 9) establishing a mint and regulating the coin of the United States, the several denominations of silver coin are declared to be dollars, half dollars, quarter dollars, dimes and half dimes, and the value of each is established. ***The Spanish milled dollar, as the same was then in current use, was assumed as the standard.***” United States v. Joseph Gardner: 35 U.S. (Peters 10) 618, at 621 (1836).

<http://books.google.com/books?id=nEcFAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA621#v=onepage&q&f=false>

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