

Chip FAQ



by Will Knight

Hello, my name is Will Knight, and just a short nine months ago, I fell in love with collecting casino chips. True to my obsessive-compulsive personality, the first thing I like to do when starting a new hobby is absorb all the material that I can find on the subject. And being a child of the computer age, the Internet is the first place I turn for research.

On the Internet, the most common place to find information about a given subject is in a FAQ dedicated to the subject. FAQ stands for Frequently Asked Questions, and usually is a wealth of beginner-level information presented in a question-and-answer format. So, out of habit, I went searching for a Beginners' FAQ on Chipping, but to my dismay couldn't find one. However, I did find another incredible resource for chipping information – Greg Susong's The Chipboard.

On The Chipboard, I was able to ask all of the questions I could dream up, and usually, within minutes, I had a helpful and detailed answer. Also, I met dozens of veteran chippers on The Chipboard who corresponded with me via email and educated me on many aspects of chipping.

As I collected this information, I began compiling it in my own Beginners FAQ in hopes that it would be an educational resource for new chippers and save them a few hours

of research. The FAQ has quickly grown to over 150 questions with more being added weekly. And now, The CCTN has been kind enough to allow me to use this medium to share the FAQ with all of the beginner chippers who do not have Internet access.

The online FAQ is broken up by category, and we'll try to publish them by category here as well. The FAQ includes the following categories that will be published here in this magazine:

1. Getting Started
2. Obtaining Chips
3. Trading
4. Storing Chips
5. How-To Tips
6. Chip Characteristics
7. Tokens
8. Acronyms and Abbreviations
9. Chipping Message Boards
10. Trivia and Miscellaneous
11. Pitfalls, Controversies and Scams

I hope you enjoy reading this first installment of the FAQ as much as I enjoyed compiling it.

To view the entire FAQ online, please visit <http://www32brinkster.com-chipjunkie/beginners.htm>. If you have comments or questions regarding the FAQ, or if you would like to submit a new question to the FAQ,

please don't hesitate to send your submissions to:
chipjunkie@yahoo.com
You can also write to me at...
304 Rosebay Way
Pensacola, FL 32526

Section I: Getting Started

How much knowledge do I need to start collecting chips?

(Question and Answer contributed by Tom Leggio)

None. While there is not much information that is "essential" to collecting chips, there are some questions that you will want to ask. Hopefully, most of what you need to start can be found right here. If you do not find an answer here, the best place to find the answer is at *The Chip Board*. The Chip Board is an online message board being read constantly by hundreds of chippers. you can post any question you have and you will have an answer within minutes (I'm not promising it will be the *correct* answer, but you will have AN answer! :)

How much money do I need to start collecting chips?

(Question contributed by Tom Leggio)

Now this is a very tricky question. Honestly, the answer totally depends on your goals and your self-control (with self-control being the most

important factor here!). You can start collecting chips for as little as a few bucks a week. Your collecting won't grow quickly, but if you start with \$1 chips, you can add two to three chips to your collection each week for as little as five dollars a week. This figure considers the cost of postage and a small percentage over face for each chip. So for roughly \$20 bucks a month, you can grow your collection at the rate of a dozen or so chips a month.

Now that we've covered Fantasy Land thoroughly, let's discuss Reality. If you're a collector - like I'm assuming you are - you will likely want to grow your collection much faster than a couple of chips a week. This will be especially true at first when every chip you see you will want because you don't already have it. You'll be skipping lunch, buying generic-brand cereal, and pawning your Timex so you can have a few extra dollars to purchase chips.

When I started the hobby, several people warned me of the "Slippery Slope". And let me tell you from experience - it's not just slippery - it's *FRICITIONLESS*. You become addicted to receiving packages in the mail every day. You get withdrawals when two days in a row go by and you haven't received any chips in the mail, and your spouse begins to complain about your bad mood - until you get your "fix" when a new package arrives.

All humor aside - you will probably desire to grow your collection at the rate of at least six to twelve chips per week. Assuming you're purchasing \$1 chips, this will likely run you between \$30 to \$60 a month. Plus, don't forget the periodic expense of supplies (your binders, flips, album pages, etc.).

Again, it's all about self-control and how much of it you have. If you're able to be satisfied growing a collection at a slower pace, you can enjoy this hobby very affordably. However, if you become addicted (and you probably will), and especially if you begin collecting \$5 chips, you better hope you have a big budget, because it can get expensive fast.

What supplies do I need to collect chips?

Fortunately, chipping is not an expensive hobby in terms of the supplies needed. The biggest supply need is defined by how you decide to store your chips. Depending on how you decide to store your chips you will may need to order flips, albums, album pages, tubes, or boxes.

The other main supply you'll need as a chipper is mailers - it's highly recommended that you mail your traders out in bubble mailers. It provides extra protection to the chips in the mail as it is not uncommon for packages to become damaged in transit. The last thing you want to receive is a damaged chip, so you should provide the same courtesy that you want to receive yourself - a safely packaged chip.

Other supplies you might consider are chip cleaners designed specifically for cleaning casino chips; chip stands to display chips on your desk, and chip frames to display chips on your walls.

Does anyone collect chips with certain themes?

(Question and Answer contributed by Debbie Meister)

Absolutely. Because there are literally tens-of-thousands of chips to be collected, most people do concentrate

their collections around certain themes. A very common theme is \$1 chips - perhaps because these are some of the least expensive chips to collect. Others collect chips just from locations - like Nevada, or Indian Reservations, or Las Vegas, or RiverBoats. In fact, one collector that I know of concentrates just on chips issued by Harrah's casinos.

Often collectors will have several themes in their collection. I for example, collect mostly \$1 chips, but I also like to collect any holiday-theme chips - especially Christmas chips. I also am particularly fond of Four Queens chips - so that's at least three themes in my collection. Here are a few examples of themes some collectors have in their collections...

- \$1 chips
- Obsolete Nevada chips
- Grand Opening chips
- Large crown, small crown, Hat and Cane, etc. chips (specific molds)
- Chips with cars, animals, football, palm trees, etc. on them
- Halloween chips
- Hard Rock Casino chips
- Cruise Ship chips
- Uncirculated chips
- Limited Edition chips
- Millennium chips
- Indian chips
- International/Foreign chips
- Fractional chips (.25 cents, .50 cents, etc.)

Themes help some collectors by giving them a goal to reach. Everyone likes to finally get that one chip they've been searching for to complete a certain theme in their collection. Others like themes because it gives a focus to their collection. Instead of a totally random collection, they're able to concentrate on certain chips. This also helps the budget. It narrows the field of chips on which

you're willing to spend your money - and believe me, there's plenty out there to purchase! However, if you're passing over all those chips that don't match your theme, you're not so tempted to spend as much money.

However, with all that being said in favor of themes, I must recommend that *as a new chipper*, don't commit yourself to any particular theme right off the bat. There will be many people who help you kick-start your collection, and you will receive lots of chips from all over to give you a taste of what's out there. Once you've received enough chips to really decide which ones you like, *then* decide to focus your collection on those chips. If you focus too early, you may deprive yourself of collecting some really cool chips that you otherwise would have not encountered.

What chips should I specialize in collecting?

(Question contributed by Lou Rey)

Anything you like! Choosing what type of chips to focus on in your collection is a very personal decision. Many people fall in love with certain casinos (I love the Four Queens chips). Others are passionate about collecting only rare and valuable chips. Some only collect certain

molds. Ultimately the decision is yours, and there's no "correct" answer to this question. You should collect the chips that give you the most fulfillment and bring you the most enjoyment.

Are there any good price guides available?

(Question and Answer contributed by Terry Shaffer)

Yes. Some of the most popular are...

- The Chip Rack (only Nevada chips)
- The Official U.S. Casino Chip Price Guide (covers casinos nationwide)
- Black's Atlantic City Price Guide (only Atlantic City chips)

For a complete list of price guides and links to sites where you can order them, visit the Books page of Greg Susong's The Chip Guide Network (<http://www.chipguide.com/books.htm>)

Where can I purchase the supplies I need?

(Question contributed by Terry Shaffer)

There are several mail-order suppliers where you can purchase your supplies. My favorite is C.T. Coins operated by Charles and Margarita

Rodgers. Charles is the current Advertising Manager for the CC>CC, and he has very reasonable prices. Plus, as a new member, he offers you a nice discount on your first order. Mail him at the address below, and he'll be happy to send you a catalogue.

C.T. Coins
P.O. Box 4572
Lakewood, CA 90711

There are also several online sources where you can order your supplies. Some of my favorites are...

- Nevada Casino Chips (<http://www.nevadacasinochips.com/>)
- J.P.'s Corner (<http://www.jpcorner.com/>)
- Cheques in the Mail (<http://www.lasvegas-chips.com/>)
- Cassidy Frames (<http://www.cassidyframes.com/>)

For a more extensive list of suppliers, visit the For Sale page of Greg Susong's The Chip Guide Network (http://www.thechipboard.com/links/pages/For_Sale/).