

This is a picture post of step-by-step instructions and photos of how I clean my silver coins. Any coin collector will tell you to NEVER clean a coin, but as both a metal detectorist and a coin collector, I do not necessarily agree with that standpoint.

The reason why I as a beach detectorist, clean my silver coin finds is that in 99% of cases, the coin is in such a bad state after years in the salt sea-water, that it is of no numismatic value in any case.

So cleaning it to better its appearance and for identifying it, would not lower its value, as it has no value (or very little value) for a coin collector. But if it is a very scarce date coin, then I would NEVER clean it .

Yesterday, I found 3 Silver coins at Sea Point Beach. All three were in a rather sorry state. Here is a picture of the coins – one British Three Pence dated 1917, and two SA Silver Shillings dated 1927 and 1943.



*The first thing I did, was to **put them in vinegar with a pinch of salt for a couple of hours**. I am a very impatient person, so to stop me from removing them to soon from the vinegar, I took the family out to see the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean II (A Dead Man's Chest)*. I think I enjoyed the movie more than the children!*



When I removed the coins from the salted vinegar, some green encrustment remained – see next pic



*To remove this green stuff, I put the coins in **lemon juice** for two hours...see next pic.*



Now the coins appear “clean” from encrustment and green stuff after the vinegar and lemon juice dip, but still dark and ugly in appearance – see next pic.



*The next step is to take some **foil (silver paper or whatever you call it in your country)**, a **strong plastic jug with boiling water** and **washing soda**. - see next pic...*



Use the foil to make little “balls” in which the coins are placed individually. Try not to let the foil stick to the coin. The coin must be “loose” inside its foil ball. Also don’t wrap the foil ball in such a way that the boiling water cannot penetrate the ball to reach the coin. You can even pinch a small hole or two in the foil for the boiling water to reach the coin inside its cocoon. See next pic – you can see that the one ball is too tightly wrapped around one of the coins – my mistake!



*Put the foil balls/cocoons in the plastic jug. **Add one table spoon of washing soda and pour in enough boiling water** to cover the foil balls with the coins inside them. Remember one coin per cocoon. See next pic.*



The boiling water and the balls will now create a chemical reaction and will start to sizzle Stand away from the stenchy odor escaping – it could be toxic.



As soon as the sizzling stops – (usually after only a few minutes) pour in some cold water to cool things down and remove the foil balls. **Take the coins out of the foil...**



Take a cloth and **rub the coin(s)** to remove the dirt/coloring remaining. See next pic....



The final product – the coins are now free from encrustment and dirty coloring. You can now brighten it up with house-hold cleaning products like Silver Dip and/or Brasso. But personally I don't like artificial cleaning products and like my cleaned coins to look as "natural" as possible.



Hope this post helps and please be careful when using any kind of chemical cleaning products. Rather be safe than sorry...