

Comparing Gold Bullion Coins: Krugerrand vs Maple Leaf

This document compares two popular gold bullion coins: the South African Krugerrand and the Canadian Maple Leaf. It explores their history, specifications, design, and key differences, providing valuable insights for investors and coin collectors interested in these renowned gold coins.

Introduction to Krugerrand and Maple Leaf

The Krugerrand and the Maple Leaf are favored gold bullion coins. However, the South African Krugerrand and the Canadian Maple Leaf have a few differences and an interesting history.

The Krugerrand was introduced in 1967 by the South African Mint to promote South African gold to international markets. Before other countries started minting gold bullion coins, the Krugerrand held a dominant position in the gold coin market.

To protest apartheid in South Africa, the Maple Leaf was released in 1979 as an alternative to the Krugerrand. During the 1970s and 1980s, many Western countries banned the import of Krugerrands.

While gold bullion is available in many sizes, for this comparison we selected the one-ounce coin which is the most popular size.

One-Ounce Size: Weight and Purity

Specification	Krugerrand	Maple Leaf
Weight	33.9305 grams	31.1035
Purity	91.67% Gold, 8.33% Copper	99.99% (1982 and later)

You may be wondering, if the Maple Leaf is purer, why buy the Krugerrand? After some research, you will notice that these two coins sell for about the same price. It may be because both have a good reputation in the global market and while the Krugerrand contains a smaller percentage of gold, it is slightly heavier.

South African Krugerrand Specifications



1

History

Introduced in 1967, the Krugerrand was the world's first gold bullion coin and was created to market South African gold. By 1980, it made up 90% of the global gold coin market.

2

Purity

It is minted in a more durable gold-copper alloy rather than pure gold. This coin consists of 91.67% gold and 8.33% copper, which gives it an orange appearance compared to other gold coins.

3

Design

The obverse features an image of Paul Kruger, a former South African president, and the reverse showcases the Springbok antelope, a national symbol of South Africa.

Krugerrand Sizes

The South African Krugerrand, initially introduced only in a 1 oz size, has expanded over the years to include several fractional sizes.

1

1 oz (Most Common)

The 1 oz Krugerrand is the most popular and widely recognized size.

2

Fractional Sizes

Krugerrands are also available in 1/2 oz, 1/4 oz, and 1/10 oz sizes, offering more flexibility for investors.

3

Smaller Denominations

For those seeking even smaller amounts, 1/20 oz and 1/50 oz Krugerrands are also minted.

Canadian Gold Maple Leaf Specifications



1

History

Introduced in 1979 by the Royal Canadian Mint, it was one of the first gold coins to serve as an alternative to the Krugerrand, especially during the international boycott of South African products due to apartheid.

2

Purity

The Gold Maple Leaf stands out for its purity. It started with a purity of .999 but was increased to .9999 (or 24 karat) in 1982, making it one of the purest gold bullion coins available.

3

Design

The obverse features an image of Queen Elizabeth II, while the reverse showcases the iconic maple leaf, a symbol of Canada. Future versions may feature King Charles III.

4

Security

In the 2010s, the Royal Canadian Mint introduced advanced security features to the Maple Leaf, such as radial lines and a micro-engraved laser mark, to deter counterfeiting.

Maple Leaf Sizes

The 1 oz Gold Maple Leaf coin is the most common, but it is available in a variety of weights. Here are the standard weights in which it is commonly minted:

1

Large Sizes

For substantial investments, the Maple Leaf is available in 1 kg and 10 oz sizes.

2

Standard Size

The 1 oz Maple Leaf is the most common and popular weight.

3

Fractional Sizes

Smaller denominations include 1/2 oz, 1/4 oz, 1/10 oz, and 1/20 oz sizes.

4

Unique Size

A less common 1/25 oz size is also available for collectors and investors seeking variety.

Summary of Differences

Purity

The main distinction is purity. The Maple Leaf's .9999 gold purity is higher than the Krugerrand's .9167.

Historical Significance

The Krugerrand has the historical distinction of being the first bullion coin, while the Maple Leaf was significant as an alternative to the Krugerrand during the apartheid era.

Design and Durability

While the Krugerrand emphasizes South African heritage with its design, the Maple Leaf highlights Canadian symbols. The copper alloy in the Krugerrand makes it more durable and less prone to scratches compared to the softer, pure gold Maple Leaf.

Both coins have a strong reputation in the global market, and their value typically tracks the prevailing price of gold. However, like all coins, premiums above the gold spot price can vary based on demand, mintages, and other factors.